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Shifting perceptions of youth who are incarcerated: Addressing the superpredator myth by understanding how social perspective-taking evolves in a "community-engaged learning" partnership

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Education

by

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June 2019

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To my mom and close friends: through thick and thin thank you for listening to me!

My most heartfelt thanks to all! We did it!

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Education

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Performed literature reviews; supervised five research assistants; analyzed qualitative interviews; coded data and ran statistical analyses.

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University of California, Santa Barbara, Department of Sociology, "The Lost Boys Narrative: How the Power of Story Can Change Lives." Dr. John Sutton & Dr. Denise Segura.
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Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship Program, University of California, Irvine, Department of Criminology, Law and Society, "Developing Effective Gang Policies for California's Division of Juvenile Justice." Dr. Cheryl Maxson, P.I.
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Professional Positions

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ABSTRACT

Shifting perceptions of youth who are incarcerated: Addressing the superpredator myth by understanding how social perspective-taking evolves in a "community-engaged learning" partnership

by

Billi Jo Starr

This exploratory study aims to understand the ways in which undergraduates perceive youth in the justice system and how those perceptions change when undergraduates participate in a community-engaged learning (CEL) course. Through this course, undergraduates examine their attitudes about the systems of education and justice and the children who find themselves within them. The course is grounded in social perspective-taking, extols an attribution ideology, and is designed to change dominant narratives about youth and the justice system. The findings suggest that after taking the CEL course, undergraduates, *(N=26),* were more likely to make situational attributions in understanding why the youth are the way they are versus the individual responsibility narrative that dominates the discourse. The undergraduates were more likely to engage in social perspective-taking [empathy] and they became more aware of the structural barriers related to the systems of education and justice. The undergraduates also expanded their descriptive language (or "rhetoric") of children in the system, from "bad," "gang members," and "inmates" to "the boys," "youth" and "kids;" a person-first, more inclusive and positive

evaluation. Thus, such CEL courses that strategically place children in the justice system with undergraduates could be a viable model for interventions aimed to change perspectives and expand the perception/dominant narrative of the "bad" child. The undergraduates' actual engagement with children in the justice system, while simultaneously and systematically learning about it, also reinforced the lack of separation between those "in" and "outside" of the justice system. Some undergraduates came to believe that, as a society, we are all implicated in systems; if we are not examining or questioning them, we are upholding them. Many undergraduates walked away inspired to change the punitive policies and procedures of the systems in which their peers found themselves. Finding a more spacious and accommodating language and rhetoric in order to describe children in the justice system has the potential to change or affect outcomes. Thereby, also potentially enhancing systems of education and justice built on empathy (i.e. social perspective-taking) and an inquiry-to-practice pedagogy.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background of the Problem

The United States of America (USA) incarcerates 6 times more children than any other developed country in the world (Hazel, 2008, 2014; ACLU, 2018). On any given day in the USA approximately 60,000 children are behind bars and 2 million children are arrested during any given year (ACLU, 2018; OJJDP, 2015). The justice system[1] has colossal impacts on society and individuals in four key areas: 1) the justice system is expensive; 2) the justice system exacerbates social inequalities; 3) the justice system damages the mental health of children and the staff that work within the facilities. To top it off, 4) the justice system is ineffective at reducing crime and increasing public safety (Cullen, 2011).

From an economic standpoint incarcerating a child is an expensive practice, costing on average, $407.58 per child per day, and totaling $148,767 per child per year (Justice Policy Institute, 2014). As a result, other important institutions such as education are underfunded and children suffer. For example, the justice system spends, on average, eleven times more per child on incarceration than education systems per pupil expenditures of $13,119 in the 2016-2017 school year (Department of Education, 2018). Although some would contend tax dollars spent on incarceration increases public safety, research shows this is merely an assumption; increased incarceration does not mitigate crime (Stemen, 2017; Vera Institute of Justice, 2017).

Beyond the high economic costs, the justice system perpetuates inequalities across ethnic groups and among other communities of children that are traditionally marginalized.

[1] The juvenile and adult criminal justice system will be referred to throughout as simply the "justice system."

In the justice system there are a disproportionate number of Black, Native and Brown children relative to White children, 4:1, 3:1 and 2:1 respectively[2] (OJJDP, 2015). Children in the justice system are also three times more likely than those in public schools to be eligible for special education services (Gagnon, Barber, Van Loan, & Leone, 2009; Stizek, Pittsonberger, Riordan, Lyter, Orlofsky, 2007). For example, children in the justice system are six times more likely than those in public schools to have an emotional behavioral differences (Gagnon, Barber, Van Loan, & Leone, 2009). Additionally, children living in poverty, children with substance abuse or mental health challenges, children facing neglect abuse or violence, children in foster care and children who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ) are incarcerated at disproportionately higher rates than children not in these categories (Children's Defense Fund, 2017). The children are punished for being born into systemic inequalities and individual circumstances that are often out of their control, (i.e. race, gender, poverty, underfunded education systems, learning differences or mental health challenges and strenuous environments). Incarceration disproportionately impacts groups of children that already fall into the category of populations that are "vulnerable."

Another point of serious concern is that incarceration induces additional mental health costs for youth and the adults who work in the institutions with them. A nationwide study found that children who are incarcerated have frequently undergone significant trauma (Sedlak & McPherson, 2010). Another study illuminated the startling fact that children who are involved in the justice system have the same rates of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder as

[2] The capitalized descriptors Black, Brown, Native and White are used throughout to describe populations who are of African, Latinx, Indigenous to colonized American land or European descent.

soldiers returning from being deployed in Iraq (National Council of Juvenile. & Family Court Judges, 2010; Sedlak & McPherson, 2010). Children who are already traumatized are being punished further and pushed into the justice system, which can cause additional suffering. Incarceration can be retraumatizing, eliciting a sense of a loss of control, and triggering memories and reactions of prior trauma (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2007). The courts, legal experts, mental health professionals, child welfare specialists, educators, parents must be conscious and responsive to a youth's history of trauma (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2007). For example, when a child is incarcerated the experience prompts distress, aggravates serious mental and physical health challenges, and works against rehabilitation for children (ACLU & Human Rights Watch, 2012). Researchers found that youth who were incarcerated and diagnosed with depression, one-third stated that the onset of their depression began after their incarceration (Kashani, Manning, McKnew, Cytryn, Simonds & Wooderson, 1980). Another study theorizes that mental health challenges, the isolation and circumstances of confinement promote the likelihood youth will engage in self-harm or suicidal ideation (Mace, Rohde, & Gnau, 1997). The damaging and traumatic impacts of incarceration are felt by not only by the children but also by the professionals that work within the justice system. Correctional professionals show higher rates of depression and suicide (Brower, 2013; Morgan, 2009), anxiety (Thiesman, Hendrick, Bell, & Amandus, 2010), psychological distress, substance abuse, domestic violence (Morse, Dussetschleger, Warren, & Cherniack, 2011) and post-traumatic stress disorders (Spinaris, Denhof & Kellaway, 2012) than most other professions. This can lead to high turnover rates and lower productivity and unsafe institutions which has a ripple effect for the children the corrections officers interact with daily (Finney, Stergiopoulos, Hensel, Bonato & Dewa,

2013). The compromised mental/emotional health of the adults impacts the (already compromised) mental health of the children. How did we get to the point where the high costs of incarceration, the exacerbation of social inequalities and the traumatic impacts of incarceration on children and adults is all acceptable in the name of public safety?

The root of the current youth incarceration situation lies in the ways in which we perceive children and their misbehaviors starting in school. If a child misbehaves the label of "delinquent" or "deviant" is subsequently slapped on the child (and, more often than not, on children that are already vulnerable) which can impact their social status and identity development (Ferguson, 2000; Rocque & Paternoster, 2011). Researchers are calling attention to the fact that "there used to be a time when discipline in schools involved listening, exploring underlying issues and deciding on a disciplinary response that was connected to the nature of the offense. Today, reason and judgment have been replaced with disciplinary practices that criminalize student behavior and create a school culture of fear and social control" (Dupper, 2010 p. 67). This phenomenon is referred to as "the school-to-prison pipeline" (Wald & Losen, 2003). Students-- particularly students of color (Fine & Ruglis, 2009), students designated as special education and students from families that are low-income (Heitzeg, 2014; Heitzeg, 2009)-- are being demonized, labeled negatively, and then shepherded out of the classroom and into the justice system for behaviors that the school would have handled previously with routine disciplinary sanctions (Advancement Project, 2013). Students who are aware of their "throw away" status may become disengaged from their educational futures and positive images of themselves (Winn & Behizadeh, 2011). This is also known as the self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton, 1948); children are seen as "bad" by adults, thereby, internalize that negative story and act in ways that live up to it.

Another consequence of such labeling and harsh punishments and policies such as "zero tolerance," is an increase in the child's propensity for academic failure; the chance of exposure to the justice system also accelerates dramatically (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2000; Skiba & Peterson, 1999; Skiba & Rausch, 2006). Research found that when children are removed from their family, school and community and placed in the justice system for first-time punitive interventions during school, the odds of dropping out of high school increase by at least three times (Sweeten, 2006). The continuous increased law enforcement presence on school campuses, along with harsh disciplinary measures (i.e. out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, transfers to alternative schools and referrals to law enforcement), have blurred the lines between school safety and discipline (Advancement Project, 2013). Researchers found punitive policies in schools, such as "zero tolerance," to not only to be ineffective, but also detrimental to academic outcomes, school climate and safety (Skiba & Knesting, 2002). The current "zero-tolerance" policies are creating unintended conflicts or problems that are occurring within the policy implementation, and causing the very problems the policy was meant to solve. These challenges provide us with useful information, and a pressing opportunity to revise such damaging policies, and abolish the school-to-prison pipeline while reimagining systems of education and justice.

Statement of the Problem

At the core of the school-to-prison pipeline is the biased lens through which adults perceive children's behaviors differently. All humans are intrinsically wired with cognitive biases that regularly impact our perceptions of the social world (Haselton, Nettle & Andrews, 2005). Biases inform the lens through which we view the world, and in particular who should receive empathy, support, and resources (Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001). Each

individual lives in their own collection of naive realisms; In other words, the world seen from their perspective is the world as it truly is (Gehlbach, 2017), so much so that they never question their perceptions. What the individual is actually observing and paying attention to is a reality their bias "makes" them see, as if that *is* the only reality; there is no other side of the story.

The dominant narrative that justifies a child being pushed into the school-to-prison pipeline process is "individual responsibility" which focuses primarily on children's deficits, as though they are inherently "bad" and "troubled." This narrative leads to pernicious effects in certain circumstances. Surely, we are agents in our actions, and in that way responsible, but if we stop at blaming the individual we cannot address the oppression and injustice that exists within the systems of education and justice. The prevailing narrative about children who misbehave to such a degree that they end in the justice system is that they lack the regulatory capacity to control their own behavior; they are perceived as "out of control" "monsters" (McShane, 2007; Lear, 2017). From this perspective children in the justice system are seen as "superpredators" who are not only "impulsive, remorseless and violent," but they have no conception of what their actions mean for their future and cannot be reformed (Dilulio, 1995; Bennett, Dilulio, & Walters, 1996; Fox, 1996; Snyder & Sickmund, 1995). There is a danger in the overgeneralization or creation of this "single story" (Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, 2017) that blames or demonizes entire groups of children.

The counter-narrative of "systems approach" is harder to establish due to bias, but it is much more comprehensive: "systems approach" that explicitly takes into account the different actors, systemic components of poverty and race, and interlinking policies involved (Halverson, Grigg, Prichett, & Thomas, 2015; Lemos, & Scur, 2016) from which any one

"misbehavior" or individual challenge arises. So long as we continue to find fault with the individual, not the system, myths like "the superpredator" will inform the punitive policy response in education and justice system, while priming the public's perception about which children are suited for incarceration.

The tenacity of individual biases is one explanation for more widespread bias permeating into societal-level structures and practices, thereby amounting to more entrenched, structural and institutional bias. Institutional and structural bias are inextricably linked to individual bias, as systems and policies are enacted by individuals (Miller, Cahn, Anderson-Nathe, Cause & Bender, 2013). For example, the biased perception of "misbehavior": either low-level, everyday childhood instances of misbehavior – or behavior stemming from a learning difference, trauma, or challenges in the child's home or neighborhood – are manifested at school. These behaviors do not exist in a vacuum but are perceived by administrators (and now School Resource Officers) as *criminal offenses*, particularly for children of color, children in special education or children from families that are low-income. These bias perceptions of specific students' actions as more worthy of *criminalization* is one of the reasons children continue to be pushed into the school-to-prison pipeline (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2000; Skiba & Peterson, 1999; Skiba & Rausch, 2006). Once in, it's almost impossible to extricate oneself. Incarceration is a complex system that has social and racial, political, economic and institutional forces that help explain the severity of the sanctions that will be discussed more in depth in this text.

The child superpredator myth has had a significant influence on public perceptions of youth misbehaviors in school, media depictions of youth crime, and the policies put in place to manage children's "antisocial" behavior (Branch, Tayal, & Triplett, 2000; Zimring, 1998).

The superpredator myth was also embedded with racially charged messages that claimed the problem was the greatest in "urban" and "black inner-city neighborhoods" (Bennet, DiIulio, and Waters, 1996). This racially coded individual responsibility narrative still dominates public discourse. The level at which children are "vilified and dehumanized" also impacts the degree of punitive response that society deems acceptable for them (Braithwaite, 1989; Cavender, 2004).

Social perceptions not only impact public policy legislation but also the subsequent implementation of these policies on the ground. Therefore, it's important to know these perceptions are malleable and can evolve, expand or change. Although a civilized effort has begun to examine treatment of children who are incarcerated, and incarceration facilities are starting to decrease their populations in the spirit of reform, at the heart of this reform effort is an exploration into the ways in which one thinks about children who misbehave and are incarcerated. It's important to apply critical exploration to the complexities of individual choice and actions and how they are influenced by the world around us, by territories we move in and images we see, interactions with adults and peers, along with the narratives we tell and that others tell about us. Understanding the malleability of these perceptions, and the biases that inform them, can unlock dominant stereotypes and provide a pathway to counter-narratives and sustainable systemic policy changes that address the costly, discriminatory, damaging and ineffective implications of incarceration.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the malleability of undergraduate students' perceptions of youth in the justice system and understand how, if at all, undergraduates' perceptions shift when engaged in a community engaged learning (CEL) course. The CEL

course could be a potentially promising way to address these perceptual challenges. The assumption is that undergraduates' perceptions will shift from primarily person-centered attributions, focused on how personal (or *individual*) traits impact behavior, to primarily external attribution, which looks at the environmental and institutional situational factors (or *systems*) impacting the individual. Presumably, expanding attributions in this way will lead to enhanced social perspective-taking and an increase in empathy.

The population of undergraduates was selected specifically for the proximity in age that the undergraduates and youth in the justice system possess. The logic behind the choice of participants was that undergraduates in the system of higher education and youth in the justice system are on opposite ends of the spectrum of education and justice institutions. The significance and benefits of the study are that youth in the justice system may begin to see themselves *in* the undergraduates and vice versa through "social perspective-taking;" thereby shifting narratives of who the youth are and what is possible not only in their own lives but in the justice system overall.

The current study hypothesizes that undergraduates will demonstrate greater social perspective-taking and heightened awareness of their ability to empathize – precisely the kind of attribution that forms the basis for the cognitive shift required to imagine walking in another person's shoes. Thereby, undergraduates will overcome their bias towards children in the justice system and examine all sides of the story, increasing their empathy for and positive social transactions with youth in the justice system, first in their personal lives, and then in their broader communities. An individual changes their perspective, and "brings" this perspective back to their community, and the community starts to shift. Research has shown that when individuals are more inclined to engage in--and are also competent at--

perspective-taking, the likelihood that they will stereotype others decreases significantly (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000). Decreasing stereotypes is the first step in dismantling inequities, but how is that done?

Furthermore, the objective is to provide a preliminary and exploratory study of the impact of a CEL course on undergraduate's perceptions of youth in the justice system and to illuminate any possible strategies that were effective in changing the undergraduates' perceptions. We seek to understand how and why strategies of storytelling and language use may work to shift perceptions. Then, these methods can serve as the foundation to inform practical changes in policies that flow from an empathetic point of view and are the first steps in reimagining the flawed, related inequities of the education and justice systems.

Significance of the Study

This exploratory study examines undergraduates' perceptions of youth in the justice system and the language used to describe them. Throughout the CEL course language was examined to determine if the words we use matters in shaping perception. Therefore, the words used in the course, and subsequently in this study, to describe people *in* this study are "person-first", and any other relevant label *subsequent.* This keeps critical emphasis on the person's self-hood, agency and humanity. For example, the course adopted very explicit word use: instead of "incarcerated youth," we refer to "youth in the justice system," or "youth that are incarcerated;" instead of "marginalized communities" we say "communities that are marginalized,"; instead of "poor people," we say "people who are living in poverty"; instead of "low-income families" we say "families that are low-income." What seems like a small shift in language use has huge implications for how we perceive these individuals and groups. There is a linguistic habit in research and community organizations to put the label

before the person, which perpetuates on the level of thought and language the exact social problem that they are working to eliminate in practice (Rios, 2008). If you are speaking about how dire the justice system is for youth, but still referring to them as "offenders," "wards," incarcerated youth or "inmates," what does that say about who they are, and their value? The semantics indicate the children are still "the other." Switching the words, we use to refer to youth/communities that have been historically marginalized/criminalized is not *just* an exercise in semantics, but a practice central to the systemic restorative changes over all. We can then examine how that language change shifts perceptions, and then policy.

In the CEL course, we implement this change consistently and as follows. For example, if the youth are thought of by the public at large (which includes, of course, participating undergraduates) as "inmates" but are referred to in the course as simply "youth" and the teacher *keeps* emphasizing, "it's not "'*inmate'* but '*youth*'" how many times must the undergraduates say "youth" before their bias shifts? And they start to see these youth as a person similar to themselves? Might this lead the undergraduates to work to abolish punitive policies that would have punished youth for the consequences of being poor when they were perceived as an "inmate" only? Once labels and perceptions shift, undergraduates may have a much harder time supporting punishment of the individual, and instead find fault with other systemic and structural failures. Facilitating this kind of specific social perspective-taking continues as a particularly troubling educational challenge (Gehlbach, 2017); the CEL course methodology allows for a way that social perspective-taking can be taught, practiced and increased.

In order to understand and shift any sort of biased perceptions the analysis must go further than the consequences of the bias and understand the purpose these biases serve for

the individual who carries them, along with what the underlying motives are that perpetuate them (Gehlbach, 2017). Discerning between the outcomes and the roles served by these biases, along with understanding "the costs they exact on the accuracy of our perceptions—will hopefully allow us to recognize when biases sabotage our attempts to walk a mile in each other's shoes" (Gehlbach, 2017, p. 5). Expanding the knowledge of what motivates a person to maintain or shift a bias may be a window for educators to examine their own bias in order to support their students in doing so. This recognition of bias can promote a systems approach or way of thinking that simply doesn't allow for the trap of bias or individual's perceptions alone but takes into account the systems in which the individual find themselves. Social systems, such as education and justice systems, function too often with little critical reflection from the general public. Thereby, damaging and oppressive biases continue uninterrupted *unless* social perspective-taking — what it means to walk in another shoes— happens intentionally or through some sort of intervention. The CEL course serves as an example of an intentional intervention.

Even if the undergraduates in the course know someone within the justice system, they are not within the justice system *themselves* and are therefore outsiders. By engaging both undergraduates and youth in the system, each group shares the experience of being an outsider or "the other" (Becker, 1963). When undergraduates and youth "step out of their comfort zones and into contact zones" (Musil, 2003, p. 5), an opportunity the CEL provides, there is a heightened potential for each group of individuals to begin to see themselves *in each other* as social and cognitive development arise and biases dissolve. Youth in the justice system may begin to see their futures in education, and undergraduates may recognize themselves in the youth as they may share many of their own traits. This can generate a

heightened sense of personal development and collective commitment to each other (McInnis, Meyer, & Feldman, 2009) which also works against biased perceptions. Undergraduates and the children in the justice system they interact with, will inevitably both become more thoughtful in their relationships and have a greater tendency to practice cross-cultural interactions instead of retreating to their own gang of like-minded individuals.

A CEL course that connects undergraduates directly with youth in the justice system creates a "real" element that can have an impact greater than only reading about the system in texts or any theoretical learning in the classroom ever could (Inderbitzin, 2006). Direct access to youth in the justice system is rare and difficult, due to rigorous background security requirements. That access alone is a special feature of the course which allows for the unique learning experience the course relies on for its efficacy. Through the CEL course, undergraduates also gain a deeper understanding, beyond theoretical knowledge, of the components of the justice systems from readings and texts but also from the youth themselves (Davidson II, Petersen, Hankins & Winslow, 2010). This unique and rare real-world experience and exposure to youth in the justice system could serve to solidify undergraduate interests in the fields of criminal justice, social work, psychology or education (i.e. where reform happens). Beyond career per se, undergraduates *and* youth in the system are our future parents, educators, practitioners, corrections and law enforcement professionals, social workers, policy makers, legislators, judges, lawyers, doctors, active community members and neighbors (Seider, Gillmore, & Rabinowicz, 2012). Youth in the justice system and youth in schools are not in those places/categories forever, we have to think longer term about solutions. When we increase the ability to understand what it's like

to walk in another shoes this may result in more compassionate systems in which individuals engage.

The CEL course extols an inquiry-to-practice pedagogy built on the ideologies of transformative pedagogy (Fujino, Gomez, Lezra, Lipsitz, Mitchell & Fonseca, 2018), social perspective-taking (Gehlbach, Marietta, King, Karutz, Bailenson, & Dede, 2015), external attributions (Wang, 2008) and cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). These pedagogies reach beyond the classroom: they aim to change the world and roles individuals play in it (Hooks 1994; Simpson, James, and Mack 2011; Lezra 2014).

How we refer to people affects how we perceive them. Therefore, one first step in shifting perceptions is to identify what those perceptions are. The CEL course utilizes specific story circle learning to bring awareness to the power of perceptions and bias, which informs empathy, expands action and impacts policy. We then study if this strategy can possibly help to change perceptions. With changed perceptions, we can hope to change damaging policies that are impacting children of color and that rest on inaccurate stereotypes for support. In addition, understanding the specific strategies that influence the shift of the dominant narrative of individual responsibility to counter-narrative and systems approaches of structural accountability, are helpful in exploring how to impact perception change overall.

Research Questions

1. What are undergraduates' initial perceptions of youth in the justice system? Specifically, what psychological traits, social and political identities and societal/interactional descriptions do undergraduates ascribe to youth?

    Hypothesis: Undergraduates will initially describe youth in the system with negative language and evaluations. Undergraduates' perceptions will mirror the negative perceptions the general population has about youth in the system.

2. How, if at all, did undergraduates negative perceptions shift through an experiential CEL course that includes engagement with youth in the justice system?

Hypothesis: Through the CEL course undergraduates' descriptive language will evolve towards more positive evaluations. Undergraduates will also demonstrate greater social perspective-taking and heightened awareness of their ability – precisely the kind of attribution that forms the basis for empathy and the idea of "walking in another's shoes."

3. What specific strategies were utilized in the course to shift perceptions and how did these strategies impact the undergraduate's perceptions?

Hypothesis: In the CEL course, specific strategies around story circle learning and unpacking traumas allowed for connective tissue to form between the undergraduates and youth who were in the system.

Conclusion

Children in the justice system are often viewed from a deficit perspective. The biased perception held by the general public is negative: that the children are born "bad," they are "superpredators" who are "antisocial" and destined for a life behind bars. Individuals all carry biases, coupled with deeply entrenched racial biases in particular regarding societal norms, expectations and messages embedded in one's social cognition that inform the ways in which an individual sees the world (Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001.

What can be done to shift the ways in which children in the justice system are perceived beyond the single story, leading to broader social change? This study will illuminate the ways in which a CEL course, with an inquiry-to-practice pedagogy, can enhance the social perspective-taking process that underlies change, allowing for an evolved perception: an "empathetic detective mindset," that would ask "What's going on with you?" instead of a "judge with a punishment" philosophy that would ask "What's wrong with you?" Engaging this way may allow us "to walk a mile in another's shoes" and see the world from another perspective, thereby increasing our empathy, compassion and understanding generally, but particularly towards children in the justice system.

The distinct dominant bias people fall back on to explain the high rates of incarceration is that of individual responsibility: "you did the crime - you do the time." This implies that the children and their families are solely to blame for the creation of the child's "delinquent" or "bad" behavior. This "unbridled valorization of individual agency" characterizes the core belief in "moral poverty": that something is *innately* wrong with the child, their family, their morals and values (Goode & Maskovski, 2001). The children and their families are labeled as "dysfunctional," "disadvantaged" or "broken."

Yet the children and families from communities that are traditionally marginalized, also embody a counter-narrative in which they possess "Organic capital" (Rios, 2012), persistance (Sánchez-Jankowski, 1991), inherent strengths, talents and experiences or cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). To adopt counter-narratives about youth in the justice system, it's vital to understand a few things: the cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) these children possess; adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) (Mersky, Topitzes, & Reynolds, 2013) they may have experienced; along with additional counter-narratives regarding the structural impact of race; the structural impact of living in intergenerational, systemic poverty; the impact of living in neighborhoods that have experienced divestment and have been historically perceived as contaminated communities (Goode & Maskovski, 2001). Examining the dominant and counter-narratives around children that are incarcerated holds implications for macro-level policy change. As the dominant narrative of individual responsibility shifts, this may allow for the change in the system itself, from one of criminalization of the individual to systemic accountability and restoration. Transformation of individuals perceptions and bias can (and must) lead to the transformation of systems and structural and institutional bias.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

"Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."
- James Baldwin

Attempting to consciously address the impacts of incarceration on the economy, social inequalities and mental health, without the awareness of the historical context, does not allow for the development of promising and engaging strategies. The undergraduates in the CEL course receive on overview of the historical context of the justice system and are required to watch the documentary *13th* as one of their assignments. There are deep-seated racially biased perceptions and assumptions that the nation was built on that cannot be left out of the conversation about perceptions of youth in the justice system today. The institution of slavery along with the ⅗ compromise and the "Manifest Destiny" doctrine are a few examples of the institutionalized belief that people of color were not legally or morally considered people. The fact that children of color were not seen as people but as property allowed for the inhumane treatment of them to be justified (Ward, 2012). For example, the historical narratives used to describe children of color were based on the perception that they were "feebleminded," "savages" who lacked the capacity to regulate their own behavior and function normally; Thereby, not even human and considered "the other." These structural and deeply ingrained messages of racial inferiority underlie the education and justice system continuing to produce and exacerbate social inequalities today.

The methodology of the CEL course, the inquiry-to-practice pedagogy, has the potential to shift peoples' biased perceptions of "the other" and improve education and justice systems. In order to understand the key elements of the course one has to understand where bias towards children of color comes from through historical contexts. In the course undergraduates critically examine historical records to understand how we arrived at this massive, costly, damaging and ineffective justice system in which Black, Native and Brown children are incarcerated disproportionately to White children.

Historical Context

Since inception the justice system was set up to be biased against children of color, particularly Black children (Bell, 2015). The justice system in the United States evolved out of the 13th amendment as a way to maintain social control over "Black bodies" while extending slave labor through convict leasing (Bell, 2015; Davis, 2003; Alexander, 2010; Ward, 2012; Bell, & Mariscal, 2011). The 13th Amendment reads: "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States" (Bell, 2015). The exception of "crime" in the language of the Amendment allowed for wealthy plantation owners in the South to continue benefiting from slave labor through convict leasing in the prisons (Bell, 2015). Convict leasing originated in Alabama beginning in 1846 and continued through 1928 (Mintz & McNeil, 2018).

To create the in-demand supply of people to serve as "convicts," the "Black codes" were enacted in 1865, which made it illegal to engage in certain behaviors such as "vagrancy," only if you were Black (Curry, 1981). Some literature describes convict leasing as "worse than slavery" because "convicts" were cheaply and effortlessly replaceable; there

was no economic gain or personal interest for the lessee to keep them alive like there was for plantation owners (Ryles, 2006). The death rates for individuals within the convict leasing system was 10 times higher than people incarcerated in non-lease states (Ryles, 2006). In fact, 25% of all Black men that were in convict leasing in 1873 died (Ryles, 2006). Additionally, no person that served as a "convict" in Mississippi lived longer than seven years (Ryles, 2006). The practice of convict leasing was deadly but profitable, an overwhelming majority (73%) of Alabama's revenue in 1898 came from convict leasing (Mintz & McNeil, 2018). This mirrors the current for-profit private prison justice system (Alexander, 2010) which had combined revenues of $3.5 billion as of 2015 (Mumford, Schanzenbach & Nunn, 2016). Significantly, children were not excluded from this brutal evolution of slavery and dehumanizing system of torture. Census analysis was performed on data from 1890 which showed that more than 18 percent of the people in prisons, and forced to participate in convict leasing, were Black youth (Perry, Davis-Maye, 2007). This trend continues today as 44 percent of youth incarcerated are Black, despite the fact that Black youth comprise only 16 percent of all youth in the USA (Puzzanchera, Sladky & Kang, 2016).

There was also the continued and rising belief in society among scientists and researchers of the early twentieth century that one's criminal behavior could be predicted by race and body type (Chávez-Garciá, 2012, p. 12). This racist pseudoscience had structural and devastating results for youth of color. Children of color were disproportionately labeled "feeble-minded" children, who were unredeemable. They were thereby differentiated from "normal" children, who could be rehabilitated (Chávez-Garciá, 2012, p. 12). The superintendent of Whittier State School appointed prominent psychologist and eugenics

advocate, Lewis M. Terman, to identify the causes of delinquency. Terman discussed the dominant narrative of all children of color (Native, Brown, Black) in his work, *Measurement of Intelligence* (1916):

> "[Feeblemindedness was] very, very common among Spanish-Indian and Mexican families of the Southwest and also among negroes. Their dullness seems to be racial…. [T]he whole question of racial differences in mental traits will have to be taken up anew and by experimental methods. Based on their data, school officials labeled more than 60 percent of their Mexican-American wards as "feeble-minded" or "unable to develop beyond the intellectual level of an average twelve-year old" (Chávez-Garciá, 2012, p. 5).

Under this construct and public perception, it became justifiable to confine and very often even *sterilize* children of color for the sake of public safety (Chávez-Garciá, 2012, p. 71–72; Terman, 1916). This practice of legally sanctioned sterilization as a form of eugenics, was to prevent anyone with a mental health challenge, criminal or specific racial background from procreating. Over 60,000 Americans (including children) have been sterilized until the legislation shifted in the 1970's (Minna Stern, 2015). However, the practice of sanctioned sterilization continues today. The Center for Investigative Reporting found that 148 females in California were sterilized without their consent from 2006-2010 (Minna Stern, 2015).

In addition to the public's belief of inferiority based on race and body type, the court systems themselves, where youth of color were tried and the correctional facilities where youth of color were housed, were drastically different from those for White children in terms of resources and opportunities, as well as how the children were treated (Frey, 1981). There were initially more humane child justice systems in place, but these applied to White children

only. The Yates Report of 1824 was commissioned in New York City to deal with the "poor and ragged children" (Trattner, 2007). The Report "recommended that institutional options were best to avoid cruel treatment, idleness, and inadequate moral and educational development in the youth" (Trattner, 2007). The first correctional institution for children, the New York House of Refuge, opened in 1825 (Howell, 2009) but only for White children.

The initial steps towards creating separate courts for children by age were taken up when future chief to the Federal Children's Bureau Julia Lathrop and philanthropist Lucy Flower came together and drafted "An Act for the Treatment and Control of Dependent, Neglected and Delinquent Children," April 14, 1899 (Tanenhaus, 2002). On July 3, 1899 the two women, along with other nineteenth-century progressive reformers or "child-savers," spearheaded the separate court for children in the United States (Clapp, 1998).

The first child court opened in Cook County, Illinois in 1899 (Howell, 2009). The court's aim was "the child's need and not the deed" (Spring, 1998) and operations were guided by the doctrine of *parens patriae*—the state as the parent with ultimate responsibility for the wellbeing and fate of its children. The declared intent of initial justice institutions for children was to "save" children who were at risk due to their criminogenic environments and families by removing them and socializing them to middle-class morals and value systems (Howell, 2009; Schisterman, Cole, & Platt, 2009). The Houses of Refuge were similar to a school with a humane approach to serving the children housed there (Bell, 2015).

However, it must be re-emphasized that Black children were not included in these reform efforts or Houses of Refuge and were often put in sub-par institutions or systems of convict leasing instead (Oshinsky, 1996). Geoff Ward notably affirms in his book, *The Black Child-Savers*, that Black children were objectified and seen as valuable commodities and

without value (Ward, 2012). Societal views about children and the best treatment of children were not applied to Black children because they were not considered "human beings;" Black children were viewed as property and as a result of this perception were treated as such (Ward, 2012). This has continued tragically in other forms to this day.

It took a decade after 1825, when the first House of Refuge opened in New York, to add sections of the Houses for "colored children." Black children that were sent to the Houses were typically one-and-a-half to two years younger than Whites and had harsher sentences and treatment (Frey, 1981). The Black children in the Houses had disproportionately high death rates and, when they were able to leave, they had significantly fewer opportunities for advancement than their White peers (Frey, 1981).

Additionally, alternatives to incarceration, such as community-based services and agencies contracted to support children to stay out of the justice system were not available for children of color, because of the prevailing beliefs of the inferiority of Black, Native and Brown children (Frey, 1981). However, the "Black child-savers" organized at the end of the 19th century and attempted to end the harsh treatment of Black children at the hands of the child justice system (Ward, 2012). Julia Britton Hooks and her husband Charles were two Black activists, charter members of the Memphis NAACP, and Black child-savers who oversaw the detention facility for Black youth in Memphis in 1902 (Ward, 2012). The youth who were housed within the facility helped Julia Britton Hooks to develop her rehabilitative vision which is discussed in her essay, "The Duty of the Hour":

> "Character should be considered the 'Duty of the Hour'…. There is in every child [this] divine principle awaiting development, [this] precious germ awaiting unfolding." (Ward, 2012, p. 145).

Hooks kept this rehabilitative vision for youth even when her husband was killed by one of the youth detained in their facility. Hooks went on to serve as principal and teacher at the public Virginia Avenue School and began her own private school called Hooks Cottage.

The bottom line of the "child-savers" and the "Black child-savers" efforts was the philosophy, belief and perception that children have developmental periods that are specific and categorically distinct from adults rendering them less culpable for their behaviors and more responsive to treatment and rehabilitation than adults. Yet, there were insurmountable challenges for the "Black child-savers:" the child justice system had become fully racialized and unwilling to invest in the rehabilitation of Black children (Ward, 2012). But also, beyond Black children, these beliefs or rehabilitative approaches never took hold in the general public or in policy and failed to defeat the dominant narrative of individual responsibility and retribution.

Over the course of history, the bias against Black children stemmed from the damaging prevalent stereotypes about Black men. The biased public perception of Black men, amplified and disseminated in the media and popular films (i.e. "Birth of a Nation," 1915), was built on public fears of Black men as out to rape and pillage White woman (Oshinsky, 1996; Messerschmidt, 1997). Thereby, Black men and Black children were rendered even more worthy of severe sanctions. Black children were seen as "animals" roaming in "feral packs" (Jackson-Lee, 1996), not even human. This dangerous side of public perceptions and sort of mob mentality based on false and biased perceptions of Black men and children as subhuman resulted in public lynching's[3] that were not only acceptable

[3]Wells, Ida B. (1892). Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases. Pamphlet.

but common, well-attended community events (Bell, 2015). Currently, the evolution of racial terror lynching's in America is confronted through the Equal Justice Initiative Legacy Museum. Investigating America's history of racial terrorism helps to understand intergenerational connections of racism and humiliation of the "Jim Crow" South.[4]

By the 1890's an evolved form of Black Codes called "Jim Crow" laws were in place to specifically sanction Black men and children for any perceived violation or wrong doing, purely because they were Black (Alexander, 2010). Jim Crow laws made it criminal for Black and White people to share civic, governmental and social institutions and other public facilities. As a result, there were separate racially segregated and unequal social institutions, such as hospitals, schools and libraries, and public facilities, such as hotels, restaurants, bathrooms, and drinking fountains (Alexander, 2010). The problems with separate and unequal institutions are systemic, developing over the course of history, impacting laws, the justice system and the subsequent treatment of the children within that system today.

These Jim Crow laws were on the books up until the 1950s and 1960s, when the Civil Rights movement sought to change that. The United States Supreme Court affirmed the laws as unconstitutional and Congress developed and passed landmark Civil Rights legislation to establish equal rights for all. While the Jim Crow laws may have officially gone off the books Michelle Alexander (2010) cites the "New Jim Crow" as the evolution of the system of slavery into the structure of mass incarceration.

Throughout history, the patterns of the justice system and beliefs of the general public, innocent youth of color have been perceived as threats, demonized as such and

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Wells-Barnett, Ida B., 1862-1931. (1997). Southern horrors and other writings: the anti-lynching campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900. Boston: Bedford Books.

[4] For more information about the Legacy Museum: https://museumandmemorial.eji.org/museum

persecuted simply based on race (i.e. Sleepy Lagoon murders, Central Park 5, Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice) while White youth typically are spared any villainization even when involved in very specific crimes. For example, Dylan Roof, the White young man responsible for the Charleston church massacre in 2015, in which nine Black men and women in a prayer group were murdered, was arrested without incident; police even bought him food from a nearby Burger King as "he hadn't eaten in a couple days" (Shelby PD, 2015). This example of preferential treatment of a White male who committed a heinous act is particularly troubling considering five innocent Black teenagers were wrongfully convicted and served sentences ranging from 5 -15 years in prison for a crime that they didn't commit in 1989. These young men came to be known as the Central Park 5 and are now known as the Exonerated 5[5]. At the time, Donald Trump (the current President of the USA), called for their execution and in fact, despite the men's exoneration, he has never recanted his statement.

These biased perceptions and subsequent differential treatment in relation to who is viewed as a threat and who is not are common to the education and justice system, along with the general population. Notwithstanding numerous waves of reform these distinct biased perceptions against youth of color were the architects for child justice legislation through the mid twentieth century (Bush, 2008; Howell, 2009; Krisberg, 2005).

In 1993 the Youth Offenders Alternative Punishment Bill passed, sustaining the doctrine of *parens patraie,* the philosophy that the state institutions would assume responsibility for the wellbeing and fate of its children. However, prominent academics

[5] For an objective representation of the story of the Exonerated 5, refer to Ava DuVernay's 2019 Netflix Docuseries *When They See Us*.

James Q. Wilson and James Fox foretold the ascension of a cloud of "30,000 more young muggers, killers, and thieves than we have now" who lie in wait "just beyond the horizon" (Wilson, 1995, p. 507; Fox, 1996; Snyder and Sickmund, 1995). One year later, influential political scientist of the 1990's, John Dilulio teamed up with conservative, former and current "drug czars" William Bennet and John Waters in the Office of National Drug Control and Policy and indicated that youth crime rates were rising. Using racially coded language, this trio predicted a wave of child superpredators who were: "radically impulsive, brutally remorseless," "subhuman," "amoral," "feral," a "new breed," of "urban" "elementary school youngsters who pack guns instead of lunches" and will "murder," "rape" and "maim," who "have absolutely no respect for human life," claiming the impact would be "greatest in black inner-city neighborhoods" (Dilulio, 1995).

The pseudoscience that race and body type could predict crime had evolved into the superpredator myth. Dilulio (1996, p. 15) further explained that these superpredators would not be rehabilitatable, and thus we should "do what we can to deter them by means of strict criminal sanctions, and, where deterrence fails, to incapacitate them. Let the government Leviathan lock them up and, when prudence dictates, throw away the key" (see also Bennet, Dilulio, and Waters, 1996). This strong language reflected the dominant narrative of the child superpredator which made its way into the political "tough on crime" rhetoric of the 1990's.

This perception of child superpredators was not only misguided but inaccurate. The hypothesis that young males of color would become superpredators who were "the youngest, biggest, and baddest generation any society has ever known" (Bennet et al., 1996, p. 26) was an exaggeration of the findings from the landmark study *Delinquency in a Birth Cohort* (Wolfgang, Figlio & Sellin's, 1972). The study found that approximately six percent of

young male children in Philadelphia became youth that chronically offended (Wolfgang, Figlio & Sellin's, 1972). Dilulio took these calculations and applied them for all youths, not just teenagers, predicting that out of the 4.5 million additional young male children (i.e., under the age eighteen) in society, in 2010, that six percent (i.e., 270,000) would become youth that committed serious crimes repeatedly. Although John Dilulio later retracted the validity of this in an amicus brief for the Supreme Court, when he outright admitted, "we were wrong" about the number of superpredator children in the midst, the "tough on crime" laws of the 1980s and 1990s remain in effect in many states to this day.

The public's strong visceral positive reaction to the language and description of the child superpredator paved the way for "tough-on-crime" policies that disproportionately affected children of color in schools and the justice system (Alexander, 2010). These "tough-on-crime" justice system reforms in recent decades have, as Barry Feld (2003, p. 778) stated, "inverted juvenile justice jurisprudence and sentencing policies" which changes the focus of youth justice "from rehabilitation ... and a 'child's best interests' to public safety and punishment." The perception of children as "superpredators" becomes self-perpetuating and cyclical: the perception of children in the system as superpredators remains in the undercurrent of legislation, which thereby frames the punitive policy decisions put in place to manage "these kids," which in turn reaffirms the superpredator myth. The *parens patraie* philosophy evolved beyond rehabilitation and now favored retribution; the dominant philosophy became to separate these child superpredators from society and incapacitate them, punishing them harshly in order to deter from future delinquent or brutally violent acts.

Less than one year after the Alternative to Punishment Bill, the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 was enacted (O'Bryant, Seghetti, & Domestic

Social Policy Division, 2003, p. 1). Additional punitive measures and "tough on crime" policies such as "three strikes," "proposition 21" (whereby youth can be tried as adults) and "zero tolerance," and increased rates of incarceration became the answer for rising crime rates among youth (O'Bryant, Seghetti, & Domestic Social Policy Division, 2003, p. 1). The Black Caucus cautioned this retributive and punitive laws could debase communities of color but Clinton signed the Bill anyway (Cohen, 2014). The belief prevailed that the only way to "fix" a child superpredator was to take an exclusively punitive approach. Research has demonstrated that the "tough-on-crime" wave was justified by increases in the rate of youth violence, media depictions of youth crime, and alarmists' forecasts about future crime waves and a new generation of child superpredators as central sources of the panic over children, particularly children of color, and their offending behaviors (Chiricos, 1996; Zimring, 1998).

The public's perception of children in the justice system as superpredators is still widely believed and has persisted since the 1990's. In the ten years between 1990 and 2000, 351 new correctional facilities or places of confinement for children and adults were opened by states and more than 528,000 beds were added. This amounted to 1,320 state facilities – representing an 81% increase (Davis, 2003, p. 93). Nationally, on October 23, 2013, there were 54,148 children were placed in secure correctional facilities, juvenile halls, juvenile detention centers and boot camp facilities, along with nonsecure residential placement facilities which include specialized treatment centers or group homes (OJJDP, 2014). Subsequently, this varies by race; for every 100,000 Black children living in the U.S., 464 were in a residential placement facility on October 23, 2013. For Brown children the rate was 173; and for Whites it was 100 per 100,000; Black children are 4 times more likely than

White children to be incarcerated; Brown children are 2 times more likely to be detained in residential placement facilities than White children (OJJDP, 2014).

The evolution and popularity of the 'superpredator' myth was a function of dominant bias towards children of color and rooted in the history of racism. To examine the current perceptions of youth in the justice system it's important to understand the historical context in which the perceptions of youth in the justice system were formed. The subsequent sections seek to understand literature from diverse fields of history, special education, social and cognitive psychology, sociology and criminology to address the research problem of negative attributions and bias along with what strategies may change these perceptions.

Perceptions and Bias toward Youth in the Justice System

Researchers and scholars alike have proffered that systems and structures are embedded with a racial bias that prevails and furnishes that racial disproportionality and disparity of the system itself (Rodenborg, 2004). Institutional bias is defined as the unintentional and indirect adverse effects of an organization's policies, procedures and overall routine actions that negatively impact communities of color (Rodenborg, 2004). Evidence was found in the research literature that shows structural issues (i.e. absence of efficient and universal risk assessments, licensing regulations and staffing requirements) could contribute to disparate treatment in the child welfare system (Cahn & Harris, 2005). These findings are consistent with other studies that propose cultural bias, insensitivity and the lack of culturally responsive resources are key factors that contribute to systemic and institutional bias that disproportionately impacts communities of color (Chibnall, Dutch, Jones-Harden, Brown, Gourdine, Smith, et al. 2003; Dettlaff & Rycraft, 2008).

Biases function as an inevitable part of everyday life and are present in daily thoughts, actions and interactions (Ross, 2014). However, interpreting or understanding bias is challenging because of the sheer number of biases that exist—social psychology textbooks are filled with countless examples (Myers, 2015). Biases are largely to blame for the limitations of one's perspectives and the lens through which youth in the justice system, and youth that misbehave in general, are viewed. For this study on perceptions of youth in the justice system, the focus will be on the cognitive bias that informs perceptions of those children who are seen as "bad" or that are seen as "troublemakers." Along with how that bias can shift through social perspective-taking.

In order to manage the sheer number of biases that exist Gehlbach & Vriesema (2019) created a theory of meta-bias that consolidates and concentrates the large number of biases that can interfere with taking the perspective of another into two causes: "a desire for cognitive efficiency and a need to protect or enhance one's sense of self" (Gehlbach & Vriesema, 2019). In order for social perspective taking to improve, the individual must be conscious of their bias and how that can influence their attempts to "read" or understand others (Gehlbach & Vriesema, 2019). For example, fundamental attribution error provides cognitive efficiency in thinking about why children are in the system: the perception that they committed a crime or did something wrong. It's challenging for an individual's brain to think through the counter-narrative and structural reasons that a child is behind bars. In other words, in fundamental attribution error, there is this overemphasis on personal characteristics and situational factors are often ignored in judging another person's behavior (Ross, 1977). The belief is that if someone does something bad it is because they are bad people - we tend to overlook other factors that could have played a role. In this form of bias, judgments are

based on the information that is easily available and often integrate grossly inaccurate stereotypes (Wang, 2008). Researchers suggest that this type of fundamental attribution error can contribute towards bias that favors punitiveness (Cullen et al., 1985; Grasmick and McGill, 1994; Jacobs and Carmichael, 2002; Sims and Johnston, 2004). The public believes that security depends on control over children that are "bad" (Garland, 2001, p. 182) and these perceptions are known in the scholarly community as the "criminology of the other" (2001, p. 137). Children who are perceived as "bad" are criminalized and seen as " simply wicked" (2001, p. 184). Once the stereotype is set (i.e. youth committed a crime they are "bad"' and deserve to be punished for freely choosing to engage in "criminal" behavior), that perception serves as an anchor for future judgements.

Another example of a cognitive shortcut is the "anchoring effect." This effect occurs during decision making as individuals take the initial piece of information received to make their next judgements and there is difficulty re-adjusting or shifting biased perceptions (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). There is a human tendency "rely too heavily on the first piece of information offered when making decisions" (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974) which thereby reinforces the dominant individual responsibility narrative to explain incarceration. When the counter-narrative is articulated, that crime is rooted in harsh inequities and prevailing systemic social stratification and thereby viewed as a socially embedded natural result (Unnever & Cullen, 2009) -- it often falls on deaf ears. The initial attribution takes over and anchors one's perception.

The meta-bias theory also illuminates how the dominant narrative of individual responsibility is cognitively efficient and also protects one's sense of self. Children that are in the justice system are bad and those that are not are automatically good. Moreover, the

dominant individual narrative implies that if any child in the system "tries hard enough" that they too can be good and make it out of the system; race and poverty are viewed not as structural barriers but as merely excuses for those who don't want to take responsibility for their actions (Tilton, 2013). In reality, communities of color and communities that are economically impoverished do not have the same opportunities and rights as others, and particularly wealthy elites (Unnever & Cullen, 2009). Thereby, to entertain or even adopt the counter-narrative of youth in the justice system, and to "humanize them, to see ourselves in them and them in ourselves" (2001, p. 184) is unconscionable and unbearable for some.

A person's willingness to shift attribution bias relies on their capacity to empathize with the child who has been perceived as "bad" (Unnever & Cullen, 2009; Joireman, 2004; Sargent, 2004; Gomez and Wilson, 2006). Empathy toward children in the justice system is difficult because they are seen as "monstrous creatures beyond or beneath our knowing" (2001, p. 184-5). Because of attribution errors and other prevailing biases, children in the justice system are placed in categories focused on labeling them as "deviant," "anti-social" or "low-achieving" and have been identified as having low self-regulation skills and a variety of learning and communication challenges (Sanger 1999, p. 90). The dominant narrative of individual responsibility allows for the youth in the system to be thought of from the deficit perspective and researchers extend this narrative through their research.

Characteristics of Youth in the Justice System

Studies show that 70-93% of children in the justice system have diagnosable educational differences, with the vast majority experiencing emotional differences and/or specific learning and/or attention differences (Leone & Weinberg, 2012). This compares with 2-10% in the overall child population (Kazdin, 2000). Specifically, the adverse life outcomes

for children with emotional behavioral differences are striking. For example, children with emotional behavioral differences fail more classes, have lower grade point averages, are absent from school more frequently and are retained more often (Quinn, Rutherford & Leone, 2001; Advancement Project, 2005). They also have the lowest graduation rates. Nationally, only 35% graduate from high school, compared to 76% for all students (Quinn, Rutherford & Leone, 2001). Of those who drop out, 73% are arrested within five years (Quinn, Rutherford & Leone, 2001). Children with emotional and behavioral differences they are three times more likely to be arrested before leaving school (Quinn, Rutherford & Leone, 2001). Children with emotional differences are twice as likely to live in a correctional facility, halfway house, drug treatment center, or "on the streets" after leaving school, whether by graduation or dropout (Quinn, Rutherford & Leone, 2001). There is a widely held belief that children know right from wrong and choose to be oppositional and make risky choices (Casey, Jones, & Hare, 2008). However, in the education and justice system, these, or any other differences, are rarely considered in any attempt to understand the child's "delinquent" behavior or in an effort to empower any sort of behavioral change for the child. In fact, children with emotional behavioral differences receive the least amount of special education services (Wynn, 2013). The prevailing perception is that these children don't have a learning difference – they are "bad."

There is also the belief that children in the justice system have higher rates of *"*neuropsychological deficits as reflected in language, verbal intelligence, working memory and reading. Of special interest are deficiencies in executive functions that are served primarily by the frontal lobes of the brain… [including] abstract reasoning, goal setting, anticipating and planning, self-monitoring and self-awareness, inhibiting of impulsive

behavior and interrupting an ongoing sequence of behavior in order to initiate a more adaptive behavior*"* (Kazdin, p. 53). Something as simple as a lack of communication skills that can stem from an emotional or learning difference, some sort of trauma or another environmentally impactful factors such as poverty, may lead to socially unacceptable behavior, that without this explanatory context, is perceived simply as "bad." American Speech-Language-Hearing Association examined the importance of communication skills and the study that emphasized that such abilities are vital to the achievement and "development of basic life skills, learning, school success, emotional stability, problem solving and the regulation of internal states and external conditions" (Sanger, 1999). It is important that children learn to communicate clearly so that their needs, wants and behaviors can be understood accurately. When children are raised with limited communication skills and cannot accurately express themselves, it can also be challenging to find or maintain employment and have healthy relationships. Early delinquency is likely to continue, if children lack the social skills necessary to find work or develop relationships (Patterson & Yoerger, 1993); these skills are dependent on their ability to communicate accurately in a positive manner.

In addition to these common internal risk factors, children in the justice system share external risk factors which include: impoverishment, emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional neglect, physical neglect, household substance abuse, household mental challenges, parental separation or divorce or incarceration of a household member (Evans, Davies & Dilulio, 2008; Department of Health Education and Welfare, 1960; Geller, Garfinkel, Cooper & Mincy, 2009; Murray & Farrington, 2008; Parke & Clarke-Stewart, 2002; Teague, Mazerolle, Legosz & Sanderson, 2008). A study of 50 children involved in the

justice system found that 96% had experienced trauma, such as repeated sexual and physical abuse, death of a parent or abandonment by a parent (Beyer, 2006). In fact, children in the justice system are eight times more likely to have posttraumatic stress disorder than children in the community at large (Abram, Tepline, Charles, Longworth, McClelland & Duncan, 2004; Kerig, Ward, Vanderzee & Moeddel, 2009). Children who have witnessed violence or experienced violence directly tend to blame themselves and have trouble trusting others (Cohen, Mannarino & Deblinger, 2006). Trauma can cause challenges with relationships, self-regulation and healthy bonds (Lieberman & Van Horn, 2004).

Children in the justice system are often labeled "high risk" due to this intricate web of internal and external risk factors. "High risk" refers to the increased risk that a child faces for dropping out of school, abusing drugs and alcohol, being involved in gangs or committing future crimes and ending up in the adult correctional system. Despite all of this, the deficit perspective dominates the public and academic conversation about internal and external risk factors of youth who misbehave and are incarcerated. This limits the explanation to *deficits* in their personal or individual familial characteristics. However, a greater number of researchers, educators and advocates are focusing on the inherent strengths of youth and their families, while recognizing the importance of shifting institutional bias in order to create positive change in education and justice systems.

These researchers push us to consider these youth "at promise" (Rios, 2012) versus "high/at risk." Sociologist Martín Sánchez-Jankowski (1991) refers to this capacity to navigate systems and adapt to the social world as "persistence." This is contrary to the widespread academic belief that people living in poverty have limited cultural capital or capacity for "collective efficacy." The fact is that communities which have traditionally been

marginalized generate solutions to their own challenges and create social order within this context (Sánchez-Jankowski, 2008). Victor Rios (2012) expands on these theories of cultural capital and applies them to children within the justice system. Rios (2012) illuminates the Organic capital and resistance identity that children in the system possess despite "blocked opportunities and criminalization." Each of these frameworks offers a strengths-based perspective of the cultural capital that children from communities that have been marginalized in fact possess.

According to Education scholar Yosso (2005) and the *Cultural Wealth Model*, there are six forms of cultural capital which include aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational and resistance. She argues that the cultural wealth that originates in communities that have been marginalized has allowed them to "survive and resist." Aspirational capital refers to the "hopes and dreams" and high educational aspirations that children and their families have despite the fact that Black and Latinx students experience persistent and disproportionate education inequities (Yosso, 2005). Linguistic capital ascribes the language and communication skills of children of color to the role of storytelling (Yosso 2005). Storytelling is considered a part of children's lives that they bring with them into interactions and institutions and these "skills [that] may include memorization, attention to detail, dramatic pauses, comedic timing, facial affect, vocal tone, volume, rhythm and rhyme" (79). Children gain social and personal human resources directly from their extended familial and community networks which Yosso (2005) describes as Familial capital. Children's experiences within their neighborhoods and families comes with communal knowledge that they can use to their advantage in their involvement in systems. How the children utilize these familial, peers and neighborhood contacts (i.e. teachers, coaches, bus

drivers, community organizers, etc.) to gain access to social institutions is referred to as Social capital. How children navigate these social institutions, including educational or judicial systems that can be unsupportive and hostile, indicates a level of skills and abilities referred to as Navigational capital (Yosso, 2005). The historical legacy of communities of color securing navigating systems for equal rights and collective freedom empowers the children in these communities with experiences of Resistance capital from their parents and community members (Yosso, 2005). However, despite the existence of this research, few academics apply the wealth model to children who are incarcerated. Focusing on youth's strengths and getting away from the dominant narrative of individual deficits is challenging as this perception permeates the research literature, media and politics.

Political Culture of "Out of Control Youth" & "Child Superpredators"

Historically, children that misbehave have been described in articles, books and films as "bad" as though they are a subdivision of "normal" youth that should be labeled "Youth in Crisis" (Twentieth Century Fox 1943). In the film "Children of Mars" (RKO Radio Pictures 1943) youth were sensationalized as delinquent, particularly among Black and Brown children. Coincidently, 1943 Congressional hearings of the Senate Education and Labor Committee focused on juvenile crime, even though no substantiated claims of a rise in delinquency had been presented (Gilbert, 1986). The prevailing public view was that fathers were away at war and mothers were in the workplace, leaving delinquent youth avoiding school, drinking and smoking with no discipline or consequences. Although the Congressional report of 1943 found that "delinquency could not be reduced to a single cause and certainly not to a 'general laxity in morals,' or to 'neglect of working mothers,' which was called a [dangerous fallacy]" (Gilbert, 1986), the damage had been done. The public now

had an image and perception that "young Americans were running wild in the streets" (Gilbert, 1986). The bias perceptions extend beyond how Black children have been categorized, and into other racial and ethnic groups.

This idea of the "out of control youth" phenomena can be traced back to media and political policy debates related to juveniles and crimes as early as the 1940s with the "Sleepy Lagoon Murder" and the subsequent "Zoot Suit Riots." The "Sleepy Lagoon Murder" was a race-based persecution in which 600 Mexican-Americans were arrested, 24 were indicted, and 17 were convicted. The prosecution and local media haunted the general public with images of the supposed dangerous Mexican-American defendants and the riots were portrayed in the press as a result of these delinquent and unpatriotic youth "gangs of young zoot-suiters" (Cosgrove, 1984). Although, all 17 convictions were thrown out, the "Sleepy Lagoon Murder" case demonstrates how the court of public opinion can be shaped before due process even begins.

By the 1950s, juvenile crime and school violence was becoming sensationalized not only in films, Congressional Hearings and media reports of the Sleepy Lagoon Murder, but also through the publication of the book "Blackboard Jungle" (1955). The plot of the book (and, later, the film) pits aggressive and violent youth who are part of an integrated vocational school against teachers and administrators, and justifies punitive measures in schools for "out of control youth." One teacher explains the "Blackboard Jungle:"

> "This is the garbage can of the educational system…and you want to know what our job is? Our job is to sit on the lid of the garbage can and see that none of the filth overflows on the streets. That's our job…we're just a combination of garbage men and cops, that's all" (Blackboard Jungle, 1955).

Once the book was made into a film, it pandered to common American fears of children engaging in delinquency. The film opened with a police officer speaking about the students at the integrated vocational school: “They were six years old in the last war. Father in the army. Mother in a defense plant. No home life. No church life. No place to go. They formed street gangs…Gang leaders have taken the place of parents” (Gilbert, 1986). This doomed negative perspective permeated the public’s perception. Author James Gilbert, contends that deviance is often a “question of definition” (Gilbert, 1986, p. 69). By the 1960’s and well into the 1970’s, the general consensus and societal views regarding delinquency had shifted the focus on poverty, race, social status, and drugs (Gilbert, 1986).

Research statistics circulated in the 1980’s and early 1990’s included false accounts of 375,000 crack babies (Aseltine, 2010; Texas Appleseed, 2010). One educator stated these “crack babies” were “little Jekyll and Hydes” (Aseltine, 2010; Texas Appleseed, 2010). Even though the National Institute on Drug Abuse exposed this “lost generation of cocaine babies” as largely “overstated,” the perception had made its mark; President Richard Nixon and his successors, starting with Ronald Reagan, championed the “War on Drugs,” and subsequently the “War on Children” and the “War on Poverty” had begun.“ The focus on children from inner-city communities that were experiencing an uptick in violence, abuse of crack and this myth of “crack babies” became a media sensation which preceded the actual epidemic with the objective of funding the “War on Drugs” (Alexander, 2010). “The War on Drugs” was really an assault on children and people from communities that were impoverished (Alexander, 2010). The media hype worked, and made the public so afraid that Congress dedicated billions to “fighting drugs” (response to public perception of a manufactured problem) and pushed harsh mandatory minimums for drug crimes. Rather than,

say, dedicating billions in social support to help communities worked and Congress (Alexander, 2010). Incarceration rates soared to a 500% increase over the last forty years and support for punitive policies expanded among politicians and the general public at large (Sentencing Project, 2016). Politicians competed for who could prove to be tougher on crime and consequently President Bill Clinton's "tough on crime" policies fueled the massive increase in the rates of incarceration (Alexander, 2010). Clinton and the "New Democrats" felt that incarceration was not enough to deter these "superpredators" and fought for legislation that would ban people with a drug felony from public housing, food stamps and other basic public benefits such as financial aid for education for life (Alexander, 2010). If you have "criminal" background you are not eligible for public benefits. This serves as one example of how communities, specifically communities of color, remain oppressed (Alexander, 2010).

The Clinton administration was infamous for its negative impact on youth and the public perception of children as "superpredators" -- the key gatekeeper to punitive policies such as the trying youth as adults. Clinton integrated the language of the superpredator into increasingly punitive statements:

> "Just as in a previous generation we had an organized effort against the mob. We need to take these people on. They are often connected to big drug cartels, they are not just gangs of kids anymore. They are often the kinds of kids that are called superpredators — no conscience, no empathy. We can talk about why they ended up that way, but first, we have to bring them to heel (Clinton, 1996)."

This sentiment about child superpredators puts punishment before understanding in ladder of importance, conjuring support from elites, probation, parole officers, and solidified the more punitive approach to the justice system (Garland, 1997, 2001; Savelsberg, 1999). There is no need to look further than the language used in bills and policies to understand the limitations of biased perceptions.

The idea of the "child superpredator," defined by Princeton University Professor John Dilulio (1995) in the 1990s has continued to maintain a prominent position in the public perception of youth. The child superpredator language developed from an abstract academic concept and quickly transitioned from social commentary to real political rhetoric of the times (Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, p.14). This child superpredator "metaphor was successful in catalyzing policymakers and the public because it easily activated the public's hidden stereotype of the violent youth as someone who is dangerous, living in a hopeless situation and not worthy of empathy or support" (Dodge, 2008). This drove legislators to focus on disarming and detaining the most threatening subgroup of children in the United States. For example, when garnering support for a new bill entitled the *Violent Youth Predator Act (1994-1995)*, Senator Bob Dole discussed the child superpredator myth in media coverage on "juvenile crime," and national magazines and newspapers published countless stories on youth violence (Kappeler & Potter, 2005; Zimring, 1998).

The media constructed images of children using the "superpredator news frame," and fueled negative stereotypes (Hartmann, 2016). For example, a study of television news broadcasts in 2005 revealed that the proportion of newscasts that aired stories on child homicides were 500 times higher than the number of children or adults actually arrested for homicides (Center for Community Research, 2005). Airing this narrative enhanced the fear

of crime among the public (Gilliam and Iyengar, 1998, 2005). Additionally, the racialization of youth crime came out of the superpredator hypothesis because, as Nunn (2002, p. 713) has observed, "the 'superpredator' was slyly constructed as young, Black, and male" (see also Rios, 2011). Research supports that those with "Afrocentric" facial features are typified with crime and more likely to receive longer sentences and harsher penalties and this is not limited to Black youth (Eberhardt, Davies, Purdie-Vaughns, & Johnson, 2006). The pubic generalized these negative typifications and episodic reports about violent offenses committed by Black youth from claims made in "gangsta rap" (a genre) (Mahiri & Conner, 2003; Kubrin & Stewart, 2006). Thus, continues the dominant narrative in media coverage of youth crime as Black youth who are "unremorseful, violent, invested with danger, ambiguous, uncontrolled and uncontrollable powers" (McLaren, 2000, p. 240). Tying crime to certain racial groups leads to punitive attitudes that have paved the way for disproportionate incarceration rates for children of color (Chiricos, Welch, Gertz, 2004).

Depictions of crime are racialized. The superpredator becomes stereotyped as a young Black male and incarceration rates for Black youth in particular continue to rise. This perception of Black youth as threats informs how the public perceives them, along with how schools handle disciplinary issues, and the track becomes reinforced and as a result, the school-to-prison pipeline is firmly established.

School-to-Prison Pipeline

The term "school-to-prison pipeline" refers to the punitive discipline process that exists within schools to manage student behavior (i.e. increased use of law enforcement and "zero-tolerance" policies), which has resulted in an amplified exposure to the justice system for youth of color (Healy & Malhotra, 2013). The student's movement through the

metaphorical pipeline begins with under-funded educational institutions that prioritize police presence and surveillance on campus, versus resources like mental health counselors, and enact "zero-tolerance" policies (Healy & Malhotra, 2013). The result is increased referrals to law enforcement, along with a high number of suspensions and expulsions for children of color and children designated as special education (Hanson, 2005). This results in vulnerable students being "pushed out" of school and into the justice system (Smith, 2009).

However, it's important to point out that the "school-to-prison pipeline" trend is nothing new. The Southern Regional Council and the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial had described the typical "push-out" phenomenon as early as 1973. *The Student Pushout: Victim of Continued Resistance to Desegregation* found that, for years, disproportionate numbers of minority students had been removed through suspension, expulsion or incentivized to drop out (Children's Defense Fund, 1975). Once a child enters the system, he/she is "kept out" of traditional schooling, at the same time increasing their chances of remaining in that system into adulthood by 70% (Osher, Penkoff, Sidana, & Kelly, 2016). We can look more closely at the steps of the process to see how what begins as a perception issue (youth of color are dangerous) becomes an acceptable reason to incarcerate.

From Point A. Subjective and Biased Policy Interpretations

Although Governors, including California's own previous Governor Jerry Brown, signed a number of new measures relating to "zero-tolerance" in an attempt to reduce suspensions and provide alternative solutions, the language of the policy still reads "zero-tolerance for willful defiance" (Casella, 2003). Decisions about what constitutes "willful defiance" were highly subjective and left to the discretion of the teachers and administrators and law enforcement, which results in a disproportionate percentage of youth of color

punished for “willful defiance” (Ward, 2014). Approximately 50% of school’s disciplinary sanctions administered were against youth of color for “willful defiance” (Ward, 2014). For example, in the 2011-2012 school year, 710,000 suspensions were for “willful defiance” which can be as simple as a perception of disrespect by a school authority figure (Buckingham, 2013). Leaving the interpretation of the broad language of “zero-tolerance” to the discretion of administrators and teachers continues to exacerbate suspension rates and the unequal enforcement of policies because we are all biased.

Authority figures’ perception of a child’s challenging behavior is the first step along the pipeline process. Perceptions are often based on one’s previous personal life experiences or personal experiences with the child in question (Simson, 2014). When a child misbehaves, this could be treated as an opportunity to learn more about the child-- or create a “teachable moment” (Simson, 2014). These openings are often missed, because the occurrence is not seen as an opportunity for learning, but as “bad.” When this happens, the child is punished and made to believe that they are innately bad. The authority figure, may believe that utilizing punitive strategies will change the child’s behavior and keep their classrooms and schools safe and within their control (Simson, 2014). Yet, as research shows, this punitive response actually serves to escalate the child’s misbehaviors (or the perception of their behaviors as “bad,”) and moves the child further along the “pipeline” (Simson, 2014). The opening to evaluate the child and engage them and their families in support and early intervention strategies in order to keep the child positively involved in school is lost.

To Point B. Under-Funded & Over-Policed

The next mechanism of the pipeline are under-funded educational institutions that implement punitive discipline philosophies and “zero tolerance” policies and in turn bolster

police presence and surveillance on school campuses (Hanson, 2005). The addition of school and local police with metal detectors and police dogs on campus creates a prison-like environment. (Hanson, 2005). Inadequate investments are made in mental health resources, counselors and social workers, and limited funding is allocated for teachers, arts, or libraries– yet there always seem to be plenty of funds for security personnel and surveillance (ACLU, 2008). The schools with the most punitive policies spend an excessive amount of money and time on disciplinary concerns (Scott & Barrett, 2004). Clearly when resources are allocated to punitive methods, other critical areas are compromised.

Originally, "zero-tolerance" policy referred to the school's disciplinary response to students in possession of drugs or weapons while on school grounds (i.e. Federal Gun-Free Schools Act in 1994). In order for states to be eligible to receive federal funding for their schools, Congress mandated that all states implement a one-year expulsion for any student found with firearms on school property (Brady, 2002) which many can get behind - who wants guns in schools? Then in 1999, the Columbine school shooting happened. Two high school seniors murdered 12 fellow students and injured 28 others before shooting themselves. Columbine increased fears nationally about violence on school campuses and created a heightened sense of urgency about school safety. After Columbine, states began to expand the language of what counted as offenses for which there would be "zero-tolerance"; thus 23 states added "fighting," 19 states added "disrupting class" and 12 states added "making threats" to the list of behaviors that resulted in "zero-tolerance" consequences (Casella, 2003). This led to an important change in the language to include students perceived as being "willfully defiant" (Thurau & Wald, 2010). Due to this change in

language and the additions to the list of behaviors that warrant "zero-tolerance" repercussions Office Referrals (OR) increased.

When a student is in possession of weapons or drugs or is perceived as a behavioral problem, the student receives an OR; this sets in motion a chain that becomes inevitable and what follows are a variety of punishments including, but not limited to: detention, out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, transfers to alternative schools and referrals to law enforcement. Increasingly, instead of managing the student's behavior within the school, the administrators continue to create the necessity, often on false premises, to engage with law enforcement very often on their school campuses. From that point onwards, the student is no longer under the school's jurisdiction, but is under the jurisdiction and at the discretion of law enforcement. The student gets an OR and does not sit there reading a book or some such. The student is now going on fast track to incarceration.

This form of punishment and disciplinary procedures such as "one-strike and you're out" or "zero-tolerance" can result in missing instructional time or removal from school. Additionally, the overreliance on referrals to law enforcement and the justice system increase patterns of contact with police and probation, particularly for students of color and students involved in special education (ACLU, 2008; Rios, 2011; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2000). Today's disciplinary practices facilitate retribution and law enforcement contact with students, not reparation. Once there is contact, there is bound to be a spiral of sequelae, and that child is very likely not to only be in contact, but in captivity.

States, Neighborhoods and Schools that are Poor

Schools are one state institution where children spend a majority of their day and where there is an opportunity to thrive. However, the chance to thrive is not offered equally

across race and class divides. Sixty years post Brown v. Board and school desegregation, access to equal educational outlets is still void and broken down by racial groups and income level – schools' resources are unjustly distributed based on income (Kozol, 2005) and inextricably linked to race. School districts with primarily students of color receive $23 billion less in education funding than predominantly white school districts (EdBuild, 2019). The average nonwhite school district receives $2,226 less in per pupil expenditures than a white school district (EdBuild, 2019). Examples of this resource inequity include smaller classes, nonwhite districts serve over 10,000 students—three times more than that average, while white school districts serve 1,500 students—half the size of the national average (Ed Build, 2019).

The schools with limited resources have limited access to these activities and experiences for children (American Civil Liberties Union, 2008) such as music, art, computers, iPad and plasma televisions, availability of additional staff in the classroom, and other on-campus facilities such as libraries and computer labs, safe and well-groomed basketball courts, playgrounds, athletic facilities , and more. Schools with the most punitive policies spend an unbalanced amount of money and time on disciplinary concerns (Scott & Barrett, 2004), and "School districts spend millions of dollars for police officers and security personnel, despite the fact that these very schools are the ones lacking basic educational resources like textbooks and libraries" (Kozol 2005, p. 62). Building up discipline budgets happens at the expense of resources going to building up the child. A child's individual characteristics, their home, their schools, their neighborhoods, and the state they live in all impact their "risk" for involvement in the justice system. Children in school districts that

have neighborhoods that are poor and schools that are underfunded increase the risk of their student's involvement in the pipeline.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2014) established that 16.4 million children are living in poverty today. Children, in comparison to all other age groups, are significantly more likely to be poor (Cauce, Stewart, Rodriguez, Cochran, & Ginzler, 2003). In addition, children of color are disproportionately represented in poverty: 40% of Black Americans, 37% of Native Americans and 34% of Brown American children were poor in 2012; those rates are more than double the rates for Asian and Pacific Islanders (15%) and White (14%) (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2014). The likelihood of children of color being poor makes them a vulnerable population. In fact, the chance of getting out of poverty and experiencing upward mobility for children born into the bottom fifth of the income distribution is significantly higher among White children than among Black, Brown or Native children. Among these children 10.6 percent of White children make it into the top fifth of household incomes, as do 25.5 percent of Asian children. But, in contrast 7.1 percent of Brown children born in the bottom fifth make it to the top fifth, along with 3.3 percent of Native children and a small 2.5 percent of Black children (Chetty, Hendren, Jones, and Porter 2018). Children of color are growing up in communities with less financial resources and remain there more often than White children.

Social risk factors for involvement in the justice system depend heavily on the wealth and other resources of neighborhoods and states that the children reside in. According to child well-being data on a state-by-state level, "a child's chances of thriving depend not just on individual, familial and community characteristics, but also on the state in which she or he is born and raised. States vary considerably in their amount of wealth and other resources.

State policy choices also strongly influence children's chances for success" (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2014, p. 1). The wealth of the state a child lives in, along with the resources and access available in the neighborhood where they grow up, can have an impact on their future-risk trajectory.

Poverty, in fact, is the most accurate predictor of behavioral deviation (Scott & Nelson, 1999). Behavioral deviation is a risk factor for involvement in the justice system. Students with academic failure and problem behaviors are far more likely to be school dropouts, be involved with the justice or social services system, have a single parent, be unemployed, be involved in automobile accidents or use illicit drugs (OJJDP, 2014). It's not that wealthy children do not engage in problematic behaviors, research shows that children who live in poverty are at a higher risk of being acculturated to perform public acts of delinquency: "Violent offenses and more public forms of delinquency are found to be high among lower-class boys, whereas covert types of delinquency are high among the middle and upper-class students" (Gutierrez & Shoemaker 2008, p. 55). Although the majority of crimes (82%) are committed by people who are high school dropouts (APA Commission on Youth Violence, 1993), not all people born into poverty become behavioral deviants, high school dropouts or involved in criminal behavior. However, children categorized as socially deviant do face a higher chance of being involved with the justice system. For instance, three years after leaving school, 70% youth labeled "antisocial" have been arrested (Walker & Colvin, 1999; Ramsey, 1995).

The stress and strain of poverty coupled with the massive and growing wealth gap, leaves certain families and communities at increased risk for adverse life outcomes. In past studies, the strains of poverty, poor living conditions and household crowding have been

linked to delinquency and antisocial behavior (Agnew, 1992; Laub & Sampson, 1993). In addition to living in environments that are steeped in external and internal risk factors, the type of employment opportunities that are available to educationally and economically challenged parents often leaves them exhausted, discouraged and with little time or resources to consistently monitor their children or offer educationally rich extra-curricular activities: "Families today don't have the luxury of spending as much time together as our own parents spent with us, teaching us the lessons of the heart" (Lantieri & Patti 1996, p. 12). Larzelere & Patterson (1990) state that couples that have a lower socioeconomic status are often marginally skilled as parents, in part because of both the increased pressures of merely surviving and their limited access to resources: "The way parents behave in response to relative poverty mediates its impact on children" (Wilkinson & Pickett 2010, p. 111). Some families are resilient, while others are unresponsive "even to the extent of becoming abusive or neglectful" (Wilkinson & Pickett 2010, p. 111). As parents, everyone is doing the best they can with the resources, knowledge and abilities afforded to them.

Children misbehave for reasons that are largely due to these external conditions in their environments yet are labeled as "bad." The failure by the education and justice system to consider these legitimate differences in a child's external influences generally leads to efforts focused on retribution; which in most cases are ineffective. The fundamental punitive core of the education and justice system and its practices and policies are the source of creating the constant revolving door of incarceration.

Language and Labeling

Children are not born "bad" or "criminal." They come to the justice system with a variety of co-occurring internal and external risk factors and potential stressors, through

social structures and systems set up to favor certain groups over others. Further, in each "at-promise" child's life there is some incident, trauma, a lived experience that starts him/her on the path off course. It could be the death of a person close to the youth or the promise of a "caring" and "protective" group that is offered by a peer that is used to recruit (Rios, 2011). Involvement with peers who engage in delinquent behavior or gangs are attractive to some children because these groups meet the child's basic needs of social and emotional support, belonging, autonomy and money (Rios, 2011). To a child from a traumatic or chaotic home, "care" and "protection" could easily seem like a better and "right" path (Rios, 2011). The children are easily entrenched in something that they never intended, long before they have learned the hidden consequences. Such children easily end up labeled as "anti-social," "deviant" "gang members" and enculturated into the justice system. However, this view of the child as "bad" or "criminal" ignores both the processes of development and the inherent "good" and "strengths" that exist within the child, their families, and their communities.

Narrative suppression limits understanding of the complexities of systems, events and individuals. Inequalities in the narratives that dominate the public discourse can reflect and perpetuate social inequities (Miller et al., 2012). Therefore, it's imperative that a variety of social perspectives from youth in the system and their families, are illuminated. Understanding counter-narratives of youth in the system are not only vital in designing and implementing more effective policies and practices, but also in dismantling the "hidden curricula" that is destructive to youth development (LeCompte, 1978). This "hidden curriculum" is also demonstrated by the ways in which adults in positions of power (i.e. parents, educators, administrators, law enforcement, probation, judges) interact with youth and the language used in these interactions (LeCompte, 1978). Understanding the limits of

perception, and expanding perceptions of the justice system and the language used to describe the children in it, can add an inherent value of empathy. Along with a compassionate practice lens that adds to existing efforts of scholars, educators, activists, organizations, artists and individuals reimagining systems of incarceration.

Youth Development Approach

Researchers and practitioners have made progress in viewing youth from an asset lens versus deficit lens. Beginning in the 1990's researchers in the youth development field began to shift the focus away from a deficit-based perspective to instead highlight children's assets. Pittman and Fleming (1991) led the argument for a fundamental shift in thinking of children as "problems" that needed to be fixed towards positive youth development whose primary focus was on empowering children through strength-based models, while developing skills and building community. These broad-based asset approach second-generation programs promoted a shift to develop ecological, developmental, and multicausal models. The methods of these models were more complex, encompassed a wider base of skill trainings over longer time periods, connected the facilitation of skills to developmental tendencies within the research literature, and focused on the varied developmental environmental contexts for aptitude (Pittman and Fleming, 1991).

Two encouraging examples of this youth development approach for young children are the Social Development Project piloted in elementary schools of New Haven, Connecticut (Weissberg, Caplan, & Harwood, 1991), and the Seattle Social Development Project (Hawkins & Catalano, Morrison, O'Donnell, Abbot, & Day, 1999). Additional examples of "whole-child" approaches include early childhood education programs, such as Head Start, which offers further illustrations of preventive interventions focused on building

competence. Youth development approach programs have combined high-quality preschool training for children with early wrap around family support services with the goal of encouraging social, emotional, motivational, intellectual, and physical development in children experiencing poverty (Zigler & Valentine,1979). Early youth development intervention programs, such as the Perry Preschool Project with African American families that are low-income (Berrueta-Clement, Schweinhart, Barnett, Epstein, & Weikart, 1984), the Houston Parent-Child Development Center Program with Mexican American families that are low-income (Johnson, 1988), the Syracuse Family Development Research Project (Lally, Mangione, Honig, & Wittner, 1988), and the Yale Child Welfare Project (Seitz, Rosenbaum, & Apfel, 1985) targeted children's cognitive and social competence in addition to parenting behaviors, family interactions, and social support. Research suggests that developing cognitive and social aptitude in children, along with changing patterns of interactions in the family, can have long-term cumulative protective impacts (Yoshikawa, 1994; Zigler, Taussig, & Black, 1992). The "Tacoma Whole-Child Initiative" has shifted Tacoma Schools from being considered as drop out factories (in the deficit) to exemplar models of positive youth development schools with improved academic scores, increased graduation rates, higher levels of social emotional awareness on the part of the students, teachers and administrators (Benner, Kutash, Nelson, & Fisher, 2013). As promising as these interventions are, they are mostly targeted at young school-based populations and not for children who are detained in secure care facilities.

Youth Development Initiatives in Justice System

There are promising models and initiatives within the child justice system. The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2014) launched the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) in

the 1990's as a pilot project. Now JDAI institutions are in 40 states and have proven effective in reducing detention populations and recidivism rates (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2014). The Missouri Model is an award-winning progressive methodology targeted at the "most hardened juvenile offenders" that has demonstrated success. Also, these solutions don't cost more than incarceration and in fact have a decreased financial cost to implement (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2014). Research indicates that structured community efforts implemented with high fidelity that are focused on risk and protective factors may lead to encouraging effects for children (Hawkins, Catalano, Kosterman, Abbott, & Hill, 1999). A longitudinal randomized trial aimed to decrease adolescent delinquency through preventive interventions designed to a community's particular profile of risk and protective factors, has shown significantly decreased rates of delinquency compared to control group communities (Hawkins et al., 2008). In addition, results from a study of the LEAD (leadership, education, achievement, and development) program indicated a reduced risk of first-time involvement by minority children with the child justice system (Shelton, 2008).

In addition to successful asset-based conventional approaches, there has been success with reflective asset-based approaches that are getting to the root of children's experiences while developing skills in facilitating critical reflection. For example, "photography, music, theater, and graphic arts can serve as triggers for reflection as well as the medium through which youth [children] can express their views and messages regarding social issues" (Messias, Fore, McLoughlin, & Parra-Medina, 2005). Children-centered openings for guided reflection and dialogue can be effective but challenging (DiBenedetto, 1992). Zeldin, Camino, & Calvert (2003) provided examples in which children engagement in community action had a "ripple effect" that benefited the children and the community, resulting in

improved resources and opportunities, and a community more open to the needs of a diverse population.

Individual-level developmental outcomes for children include increased self-efficacy and self-awareness as well as positive identity development, positive social bonding, awareness of organizational operations and interpersonal relations, and a sense of purpose (Cargo, Grams, Ottoson, Ward, & Green, 2003; Chinman & Linney, 1998; Kim, Crutchfield, Williams, & Hepler, 1998; Wallerstein, Sanchez-Merki, & Verlade, 2005). Inter-personal effects included occasions for children and adults to devote time to each other, identify and acknowledge each other's strengths and talents, and value "partnership and collaboration," thus spanning current divides and continuing to integrate children into the expansive social worlds of community (Chinman & Linney, 1998).

While there are promising efforts and research to reduce children's involvement in the justice system that are effective, and while this is an improvement, it still relies on the dominant narrative of individual culpability. Thus, extending the dominant individual responsibility narrative. This primary focus on the individual and their personal rehabilitation furthers the long-standing bias in social work and justice system interventions that focus on changing individual youth instead of addressing broader racial, social and economic inequalities (Sarri & Finn, 1992). These systemic factors are not even acknowledged as contributing/shaping an individual, too.

What is absent in the literature is the fact that the broader inequalities cannot be addressed without examining perceptions and understanding how one could take on the perspective of the "other." If individuals cannot see each other as human, and "walk a mile in their shoes," the subsequent systems and policies which are created by individuals will

continue to focus on managing the "other" with minimal regard. The dominant narrative of individual responsibility will persist.

Learning to take on the perspective of "other" is vital in order to be open to the counter-narrative story that is focused on dismantling the structural inequalities and reimagining education and justice systems that are cost efficient, effective in their mission and are compassionate, not punitive or demoralizing. In other words, if one cannot take on the other's perspective and see them as human, punishment and control will remain viable solutions used to manage behavior for children in schools and the justice system. Systematically changing perceptions of children within these systems to see them as deserving of compassion and care can shift the policy focus and budget priority to addressing structural inequalities so that children don't have to "act up" in the first place.

Social Perspective Taking

Social perspective-taking is the process by which one interprets and makes sense of others' thoughts and feelings which informs nearly all social interactions (Gehlbach, 2017). At its core, social perspective-taking is social-cognitive process: "In cognitive-developmental or symbolic-interactional theories of society, the primary meaning of the word ' social' is the distinctively human structuring of action and thought by social perspective-taking (role-taking), by the tendency to react to the other as someone like the self and by the tendency to react to the self's behavior in the role of the other" (Kohlberg, 1968, p 398). The reflective process of social perspective taking is possible when there is an understanding of the relation between self (ego) and other (Baldwin, 1906).

It's easy to be motivated to take on the perspective of people you love, your family and friends, but the essential step forward to increased understanding of others is to "engage

in [social perspective-taking] with people we don't already care about" (Gehlbach, 2017). Far too many children in the justice system are treated as such "the other": children that are not already or instinctively cared about by the general public, and are often written off as unworthy of care. 'Social perspective-taking'' can be the way to reduce bias in the way individuals see each other (Gehlbach, 2017).

Being able to understand another person's perspective, through direct discussion with that person has also been described as "perspective getting." "Getting" someone's perceptive can reduce egocentric bias and interpersonal accuracy, while "perspective taking" may not do so (Caruso, Epley & Bazerman, 2006; Eyal, Steffel Epley, 2018). For example, studies show that most people learn about crime from the media; these media images often fail to consider or convey the background or personal history of the "criminal" can contextualize them in their environment and any systemic variables that could contribute to the reasons why they allegedly committed the criminal behavior (Beckett & Sasson, 2000). These images provide an opportunity for social perspective-taking but from a specific viewpoint, which is often negative. The media focuses on the person or "criminal" and strays away from discussion around the system that "produced" them. Similarly, the stories of youth who are in the justice system are often not heard in their own voices. It is conceivable that as people learn about the individual and their life stories from the individuals themselves, there may be an increase in the ability to empathetically identify with them and "get" their perspective rather than merely "take" it from other sources, positive or negative. For the purpose of this study social perspective-taking and getting were combined because of the belief that taking on another person's perspective involves getting an individual's side of the story directly.

As one engages in the process of social perspective-taking there is a newfound understanding that perspectives of the world are subjective and others see the world in a different way (Fleury-Steiner, 2002; Unnever & Cullen; 2009). As social perspective taking develops empathetic understanding naturally evolves, since empathy is a function of a person's conception of self and others (Selman, 1975). In other words, the increase of emotional sentiments, such as empathy, is a function of the emergence of cognitive process of social perspective taking; understanding the nature and relation of self and other (Selman, 1975). Social perspective-taking is a process of understanding another perspective and serves the function of expanding the emotion of empathy. In the CEL course readings, documentaries, assignments and experiential projects were utilized in order to increase social perspective-taking. In addition, to written, video and hands learning, oral methods of learning were utilized in the CEL course to impact social perspective-taking. The youth from Los Prietos Boys Camp came to speak in the CEL course in order for undergraduates to "get" the youth's perspective directly through their own voices and personal stories. The desired outcome of the social perspective-taking process was to potentially increase the emotion of empathy that the undergraduates possessed towards youth in the justice system overall.

Empathy

The development of empathy continues from childhood, through adolescence and into adulthood and is related to the degree of social perspective-taking ability (Selman,) which was an expansion of the ideas of Baldwin (1906), Mead (1934), and Kohlberg (1968). Research shows that empathy is an emotion or cognitive state that recognizes the emotions of others along with their experiences, and can even be felt for people in stigmatized groups, such as "murderers" (Batson, 1997). In the study, when these empathetic cognitions towards

an individual group member or “murderer” emerged these empathetic feelings could be generalized to the whole group of people or “murderers” (Batson, 1997). The basis of the CEL course is that if empathy can be increased through social perspective-taking for highly stigmatized groups, perhaps this could be applied to groups of children that have been stigmatized, such as youth in the justice system.

Researchers indicate that empathy or “imagining the others perspective” is also related to traits of being forgiving and comforting of others, which reduces the predilection for controlling crime through punitive policies (Chase-Lansdale, Wakschlag & Brooks-Gunn, 1995; Exline, Everett Hill & McCullough, 2003; Unnever & Cullen, 2005). Research shows that increased empathy is connected to a lack of support for punitiveness (Singer, Seymour, O'doherty, Kaube, Dolan, & Frith, (2004). For example, empathetic individuals were less likely to support the death penalty (Unnever, 2005). If individuals are more empathetic towards children that are seen as “bad,” this could lead us away from the current punitive policies such as zero-tolerance in schools and incarceration and towards more empathetic policies and institutions.

Story Circle

In the present study, “story circle,” is the method in which individuals tell their personal stories in their own voices. This method of storytelling was used to enhance the process of social perspective-taking and increase the emotion of empathy. This type of interpersonal alternative learning model guides the CEL course.

Storytelling is a venerable tradition that dates back across the centuries. Storytelling is used across cultures in traditions of legends, folktales, fairytales, tall tales, myths and jests passed down through generations. Ireland and Africa are two influential Old-World source

areas where the institution of community storyteller (the *sennachie* and *griot*) garnered great respect (Burrison, 2019). The story circle method in particular came out of the civil rights movement of the 1960's and was developed by the Free Southern Theater. The deep dialogue and active listening that comes with the telling of personal stories informed the unity of the Civil Rights movement and that is needed today as much as in the 1960's.

In the CEL course the youth's stories are shared directly by the youth themselves, in order for undergraduates to hear the youth's story from their own individual perspectives. Also, undergraduates shared their personal stories and traumas with their fellow classmates. Through story circles undergraduates understood that there are social causes and consequences that people like them and different from them have to contribute that are of value (Michna, 2009; Buras, Randels, Salaam & Students at the Center, 2010; Lipsitz, 2016). This form of witnessing, recognizing and understanding one another in the social context is referred to as "the SWAPA approach" (Alvarez, 2014; Sandoval, 2007).

> The SWAPA approach creates collectivities that identify tactics and strategies for confronting the present. It is an immense social and political apparatus into which we are born, and within which we would like to intervene in order to bring about more humane forms of exchange. How do we make these interventions? We need to find new ways of thinking, talking, performing, exchanging, becoming. . . . Such questioning will make us vulnerable both to ourselves and to one another. In this way, we learn about ourselves and about each other's past histories as these are currently inscribed on our bodies and beings. (2007, 18)

The SWAPA or Spoken Wor(l)d-Art-Performance-As-Activism approach was developed by Chela Sandoval, a Chicana feminist. SWAPA connects performance and activism, and is a pedagogical tool to build community and inspire activism. SWAPA "traces the methods of shaman ritual witnessing, healing circles, and early feminist consciousness- raising groups and artistic spaces" (Alvarez, 2014) along with their impact on the creation of knowledge and possible transformation.

The researcher felt that in order for change to occur in the justice system overall, institutional and individual bias has to be examined through human exchange and witnessing of personal stories from those impacted. This is why an inquiry-to-practice methodology, utilized in the CEL course, that seeks to develop a pedagogical praxis of transformative language and reflective collective action is vital. In order to reimagine systems of education and justice we must challenge traditional systems and individuals' roles within them.

Inquiry-to-Practice-Pedagogy

The inquiry-to-practice pedagogy builds on the ideologies of transformative pedagogy (Fujino, Gomez, Lezra, Lipsitz, Mitchell & Fonseca, 2018), social perspective-taking (Gehlbach, 2018), cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and collective action that hopes to change the world and roles individuals play in it (Hooks, 1996; Simpson, James, and Mack 2011; Lezra 2014). Transformative Pedagogy is the interdisciplinary practice of intergenerational learning and ways of knowing that add to the individual and collective understanding of structures and systems and also transform these social relations through collective action and analysis (Fujino, Gomez, Lezra, Lipsitz, Mitchell & Fonseca, 2018). Based on the critical pedagogy understandings of Paulo Freire's (1970/2007) Pedagogy of the Oppressed that insists education is freedom and must include the examination of social

challenges and systems of injustice, transformative pedagogy sees teaching, learning and knowledge as a "key weapon" that individuals can use in their daily struggle for survival and resistance (Fujino, Gomez, Lezra, Lipsitz, Mitchell & Fonseca, 2018). The inquiry-to-practice pedagogy seeks to extend this by bringing the system into the community engaged learning course through scholarly readings and critiques, combined with the personal stories of youth and undergraduates, and provide an avenue to engage in collective action work directly with youth in the justice system. The undergraduates are critically examining the justice system for children and reimagining that system, while simultaneously engaging with youth in the system through storytelling, and solving real world problems of over incarceration.

The CEL course extols an inquiry-to-practice pedagogy, investigation-based learning combined with praxis, which allows for undergraduates to share both the dominant stereotypical and negative biased narrative of children in the system as "bad" and alternative stories of youth with inherent strengths, brilliance, resilience and persistence. These stories connect to the youth and undergraduates' personal lived experiences in social and historical context. The CEL course provides a practice component and unique way of learning about and engaging with both systems and the "other" that goes far beyond research and inquiry, and moves into actual engagement with the communities in these systems.

Not only are the students engaging with youth within the systems of incarceration but with their fellow undergraduates within the system of education. The language undergraduates used to describe these systems and roles within these are challenged. Part of the undergraduates learning becomes the unlearning of all of their assumptions that they had about youth and systems that they think they know something about. Thus, the narratives

themselves illuminate how the system cannot be separated from the classroom. When undergraduates begin to realize that youth in the system are just like them - they can no longer demonize them, or separate themselves from systems of education and justice that they are all engaged in historically and socially.

Research studies show that community service learning opportunities are often based on character education (Kahne and Westheimer, 2003, p. 36). Most programs "embrace a vision of citizenship devoid of politics" underscoring "developing individual character traits, volunteerism, charity" and are absent of "teaching about social movements, social transformation, and systemic change." Other critiques of service learning indicate that "much of it focuses on the maintenance of social and political institutions rather than on action for social justice" (Watts and Flanagan, 2007, p. 779). Often the issues of power, justice and systemic change are not dealt with in service-learning opportunities and "for most scholars in the United States, youth social action aimed at the roots of social injustice is near the periphery of theory and research on civic engagement" (Watts, Diemer, and Voight, 2011, p. 43). The CEL course encourages students to explore and grapple with "the systemic social nature of inequality, injustice and oppression" (Marullo, 1999, p. 22 quoted in Mitchell, 2008, p. 52) while addressing the costly, ineffective, damaging and deeply prejudicial implications of incarceration. The course allows participants to expand beyond the dominant narratives that demonize or glorify the individual, and explore counter-narratives while reimagining systems of education and justice. Undergraduates examine the punitive nature of policies in public schooling and the justice system, along with the perceptions that informed the dehumanization of systems at the structural level. Undergraduates expand their historical knowledge of systems and structures while hearing

the youth's stores firsthand, and through them, become aware of the youth's positive resistance despite the structural barriers that impact them. This social justice paradigm challenges the distinction between helper and helped, and instead strives to foster more egalitarian relationships, collaborative learning and action for change. As Lori Pompa (2002), founder of Inside Out Prison Exchange program, explains, critical community engaged learning differs from charity in that it "involves becoming conscientious of and able to critique social systems, motivating participants to analyze what they experience while inspiring them to take action and make change" (p. 75).

Language itself is constructed in the dynamics of power. The dominant narrative regarding youth in the system is negative and dismisses the youth's inherent knowledge, worth, strengths, resilience, persistence and value. The CEL course relies on much more than the readings for its power and efficacy: Participants witness each other and see each other fresh through storytelling. They take on the perspective of *the other,* develop empathy and the ability to humanize the youth. Additionally, undergraduates are inspired and equipped to engage in hopeful, positive, restorative action and careers, reimagine compassionate systems to benefit self and others, and to create a better world.

Chapter 3. Methods

Study Design - Mixed Methods

The purpose of this exploratory research study is to examine undergraduate's perceptions of youth in the justice system and explore how undergraduates' perceptions change over time based on exposure to youth who are incarcerated. The study follows a convergent parallel-mixed methods design (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2012) and was conducted with a retrospective cohort approach (Henry, Moffitt, Caspi, Langley, & Silva, 1994). This approach is limited to exploring the perspectives of college students and how these perspectives change over time. The investigation examines a non-representative sample of the population over time and acquires preliminary measures of association to develop future in-depth rigorous studies and interventions (Henry et al., 1994).

Initially, the CEL course was not set up with the intention of rigorously measuring program outcomes or effects. Therefore, a retrospective examination of quantitative and

qualitative data through the cohorts was the most viable approach to understanding how, if at all, undergraduates' perceptions changed after their involvement in the CEL course.

Ethical Considerations & Verification

The researcher was the original developer of the curriculum for the course that is now titled "Literatures in Juvenile Justice: Theory to Practice" and is one of the co-founders of the nonprofit organization Freedom 4 Youth. Plus, the researcher currently serves as the Advisor for the Freedom 4 Youth Advocates undergraduate mentorship campus organization at UCSB. The researcher's unique access and interest in the success of the program could be seen as problematic because of the unusual relationship to both the undergraduate subjects of the study and the youth they were learning about. However, several safeguards were employed to reduce coercion and bias. Four strategies were applied in this study to ensure external validity and reliability. First, triangulation was used to assess the reliability and internal validity of the results with multiple mixed methods of quantitative and qualitative data collection (Merriam, 1988). It was important for the researcher to triangulate the different methods of data collection not only to cross-validate that the data matched onto each other when reviewed by a research assistant, but also to capture different dimensions of the same results to determine if a change in perception occurred. Second, member-checking was drawn upon during the completion of the analysis. This form of review and dialogue with members regarding the researchers' interpretations of members realities and meanings served to ensure the accuracy of the data (Lofland & Lofland, 1984; Lincoln, & Guba, 1985). Third, inter-rater reliability was assessed by having a research assistant code the data specifically for the qualitative coded data of one weekly assignment and the quantitative data in the pre-post assessments and then the two sets of ratings were compared. The researcher

determined the inter-rater reliability measurement based on the number of points in the text that the research assistant agreed and a percent agreement was calculated. Finally, all parts of this study were subjected to the scrutiny of external auditors, Dr. Hunter Gehlbach and Dr. Jason Duque in the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education, Dr. Diane Fujino, professor in Asian American Studies and Dr. Rick Benjamin, Director of Community Engagement, at the University of California, Santa Barbara. This research was supervised closely to assure the impartiality of the analysis.

Situated Knowledge

The researcher has spent considerable time in the field (weekly since 2008) and has developed meaningful and long-term relationships with several undergraduate students, families and members of Freedom 4 Youth, the original co-founders of Freedom 4 Youth, and Santa Barbara County Probation. The researcher is also the developer of the CEL course and one of the professors of the CEL course. The researcher therefore had to grapple with her "situated knowledge" and the challenge of neutrally taking on the viewpoint and agency of the members. Ideas cannot escape from their historical context (Haraway, 1988) and the researcher could not separate themselves from the history and involvement with each part of this study.

For an example of this situated knowledge, in this study the fact that the researcher was close to the triumphs, joys, sufferings, and even deaths of individuals (both youth and undergraduates) and their families caused the researcher to confront the vulnerability of life, along with awareness of impermanence and loss. This emotional and personal involvement meant that the researcher could not be totally objective or neutral and in fact this neutrality

does not exist (Haraway, 1988). In fact, there are benefits to be gleaned from the researcher's insider knowledge.

For the researcher and other feminist theorists, objectivity was not about removing oneself (Haraway, 1988) but about taking risks in worlds where there are unequal structures, such as undergraduates in the education system and youth in the justice system. Ultimately, this left the researcher objective because there was no clear cut, finite and distinct ideas (Haraway, 1988) of how or why undergraduates perceptions may change. This type of situated knowledge uncovered and illuminated new knowledge about perception change, formed the basis for new research questions with original insights about the strategies that informed perception change, and exposed novel layers of meaning through the lens of the members of the study themselves (Tullis & Benjamin, 2011). There was also the responsibility of empathy and reciprocity in the researcher–member relationship that is considered vital and played an essential role in this study (Newbury, 2011). The researcher is trusted considerably, not only by members of the study but by the youth at Los Prietos and the probation department which could have impacted the level of sharing and involvement in the CEL course and subsequent study.

The critical ethical point to take away is that the relationship between the researcher and members of the study is not defined merely by these roles. The relationships are not merely between researcher and researched or helper and the helped but are interrelationships based on reciprocity and responsibility to ourselves, each other and the world.

Setting: University of California, Santa Barbara & Los Prietos Boys Camp

In this study there are multiple settings that each require descriptions. The University of California, Santa Barbara is the setting where the undergraduate participants are located on

who participated in the two different versions of the same course. *Course 1: Working with Youth in the Juvenile Justice System* and *Course 2: Literatures in Juvenile Justice*. As part of both of the courses at UCSB there was exposure to youth in the justice system from the Los Prietos Boys Camp. The access to Los Prietos Boys Camp and youth incarcerated in the facility was facilitated by Freedom 4 Youth. Freedom 4 Youth is a 501 (c)3 nonprofit organization that has conducted educational programming with youth at the Los Prietos Boys Camp for the last decade.

Community Engaged Learning Course, UCSB

Course 1: Working with Youth in the Juvenile Justice System

The independent study research discussion course took place in a UCSB classroom in the education building. The tables were eight feet long and were set up in a U-shape with the chairs facing the front of the room. The instructors would sit in the U-shape to connect the space between the tables and close the circle. The classroom was set up this way on purpose to create the "story circle" forum in which undergraduates go around in a circle discussing the theme or concept from that week's reading and reflections (see Appendix 1.) Course readings were focused on the history of the justice system, theories of crime and delinquency, ecological perspective of the individual, systems and environmental characteristics of youth in the justice system, evidence-based practices and the exploration of creating systemic change in the justice system (see Appendix 1.)

The weekly reflections were set up in a group forum online. Undergraduates were instructed to formulate their response based on the selection of readings that week and quotes or poems. Part of the assignment was that undergraduates had to engage with at least one fellow students' response to increase student interaction. Prompts were kept in an open-

ended format to encourage open-ended responses: “After reading the following quote, reflect on your thoughts, feelings, reaction, etc. Feel free to write, sing, or draw your response--express yourself in any way you feel comfortable. Be prepared to share your response with the rest of the group in the next class session.”

Storytelling was a weekly event and guest speakers were emphasized. A group of youth from Los Prietos Boys Camp came halfway through the quarter to share their individual stories, along with a retired Judge, Probation Officer, PhD student who was previously incarcerated and other individuals that were system impacted. In class activities were focused on exploring concepts of mental health both in populations of youth in the justice system as well as, a self-exploration with professors and undergraduates in the course.

Course 2: Literatures in Juvenile Justice

Freedom 4 Youth’s CEL partnership with UCSB undergraduates and youth in the system has burgeoned into a formalized course taught by Freedom 4 Youth Co-Founders, Billi Jo Starr and Meghann Newell, along with UCSB professor Rick Benjamin. The course is titled “Literatures in Juvenile Justice: Theory to Practice” and was in a UCSB classroom in the comparative literature department with desks that had attached chairs. Each class we would arrange the desks in a circle and return them to rows after class. Again, creating the opportunity for “story circle” and conditions in the classroom in which the undergraduates can have as much (if not more) knowledge and expertise than the teachers. Undergraduate students in the courses read a range of materials from multiple genres, including fiction and non-fiction, critical race theory, poetry & plays, while having access to youth at Los Prietos Boys Camp. Similar to Course 1, to examine the systems of education and justice as a

"practice of community," literature was selected that ranged from scholarly articles (see Appendix 2), readings such as, Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete*, Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, Victor Rios, *Punished*, along with documentaries such as *13th*, and poems Langston Hughes, to writings and personal stories from youth and interaction with the youth themselves. The combination of genres underscored the interconnected systems and dominant and counter-narratives of youth in the justice system. Building on the transformative pedagogy of Fujino, Gomez, Lezra, Lipsitz, Mitchell & Fonseca, (2018) and the works of Paulo Freire who suggests learning based in "a concern for humanization" distinguished by "the yearning of the oppressed for freedom and justice, and their struggle to recover their lost humanity" (1970/2007, 43–44). 2007, 43). Undergraduates examine language and perception through historical realities and situated knowledge both in their own academic inquiries and experiences, along with those of the youth in the justice system. The format of the "story circle" comes directly from the Free Southern Theatre founded in the 1960's out of the civil rights movement. This type of forum underscores the concern of placing the CEL course and the undergraduates learning within the context of history and the struggles we each face as humans, but particularly the struggles for civil rights and social justice. Guest speakers for the class included youth the facility Los Prietos Boys Camp, a unique secure care facility within the justice system, for children who have been identified as deviant.

Although the two courses were in separate quarters and different undergraduates were enrolled, the structure of the courses were similar. Both courses were in partnership with the nonprofit organization Freedom 4 Youth. Also, the undergraduates in both classes were required to do the same weekly assignments, reflections and projects in the same sequence.

In addition, the PowerPoint presentations and subsequent discussions questions the professors used in each class were equivalent. There were a few notable differences between the two courses. *Course 1* had several guest speakers including the youth from Los Prietos and during *Course 2* the youth from Los Prietos were the only guest speakers. Also, *Course 1* had two professors and was an independent study course within the Education Department. The students heard about the course through word of mouth and their personal friends. As a result, there were a lot of students with the same major in the course. On the other hand, *Course 2* was a listed course in the catalog within the Comparative Literature Department and that attracted undergraduates with a variety of majors. Additionally, during *Course 2* the original two professors were joined by a third professor. The telling of personal stories was emphasized in both classes, however, in *Course 2* the intimate size of the room and the additional professor allowed for a different level of sharing to occur between the undergraduates, youth and professors. Despite the differences, the similarities of the course are significant. Therefore, for the purposes of this study the courses and the undergraduates who participated will be collapsed into one sample.

Background: Los Prietos Boys Camp

Once a child is arrested and booked into the Santa Maria Juvenile Hall, they go before the judge to determine their sentence. Some of the children (ages 14 – 18) are sentenced by the judge to a 4 – 6-month commitment at the Los Prietos Boys Camp, which is run by the Santa Barbara County Probation Department. The youth are surrounded by nature about 20 miles from Santa Barbara in the Los Padres National Forest. They participate in school daily.

The Camp and the school, Los Robles, emphasize the importance of attending college. College and career fairs are held, college visits are taken and college admissions

counselors come to motivate the youth to pursue a higher education. Those of age are supported to register for school. The local Rotarians organizations also offers college scholarships of $500.00 for each semester or quarter the student is enrolled. While at the Camp, there are opportunities for the children to participate in courses at the University level. Theatre and Dance Professor Michael Morgan teaches a theatre and dance course in which UCSB students and the youth at Camp collaborate, produce and perform a play titled "The Odyssey." Through an additional collaboration with Freedom 4 Youth, UCSB, and SBCC, an Ethnic Studies course was previously being offered at the Camp (Fujino, Gomez, Lezra, Lipsitz, Mitchell & Fonseca, 2018). The children were able to receive college credit upon course completion.

In addition to promoting a strong connection to education, there is also a focus on practical life and vocational skills. The youth participate in work crews for the United States Forest Service, Business center, Computers for Families, Laundry and Kitchen Crew. The youth also have individual counseling and counseling programs, such a Moral Reconation Therapy, Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and Chapel. Plus, the children are able to leave Camp (supervised by probation staff) to do service in the surrounding communities and attend field trips to places like Dodger games and museums. The Camp also publishes their own book of poetry annually with the children's original work and choose a Poet Laureate. UCSB students also mentor the children while at Camp and support them when they are released through Freedom 4 Youth. The probation staff are caring and appear supportive of the children even at "their worst." Some of the children refer to Camp as a homelike environment and the probation staff like "second parents." The children are exposed to new experiences and are honored for their achievements in different ways for

their behavior through silver and gold votes and can leave Camp to attend special field trips or visit their families.

The structure of the Camp, the emphasis on education and the fact that youth are allowed to leave while being incarcerated is incredibly unique. Other secure care facilities in which youth are incarcerated are not set up in this way. Facilitating interaction between youth in the justice system and undergraduates in a University setting was possible because of the unique structure of Camp and the trust that Freedom 4 Youth has built with Santa Barbara County Probation over the years.

Background Freedom 4 Youth

The nonprofit organization, Freedom 4 Youth (F4Y), developed, originally independent of the University, out of the desire to change the dominant narrative that exists about children in the system and create a more humanistic approach to educational and justice systems. F4Y operates out of Santa Barbara County, which has the highest rate of children living in poverty, the highest rate of teenage pregnancy and the 3rd highest murder rate in the State of California per capita (Santa Barbara County Probation Report, 2018). Since 2008, F4Y has grown a comprehensive, grassroots program that empowers youth within and beyond the child justice system. F4Y provides personal and leadership development, one-on-one mentorship, and tailored transition support to help children transition from detention to freedom while identifying satisfying careers, pursuing higher education, and nurturing their families (Freedom 4 Youth Website, 2019). The stories of these children, after they are served by F4Y, demonstrate that compassion and commitment

pay off with decreased recidivism, positive career and education outcomes, and increased community engagement (Starr, 2013).

F4Y provides programs and services to the youth sentenced to the Los Prietos Boys Camp, Santa Maria Juvenile Hall, the Workforce Development Board; and previously the Alternative Report and Resource Center; Westside Boys & Girls Club; and the Department of Social Services. F4Y is not only a traditional model of direct service, but also a part of the larger effort to provide individual skills- based education, while also building models of critical community engaged learning with children in the justice system and students in higher education systems predicated on social justice paradigms (Mitchell, 2008). F4Y's foundation was created with a social justice paradigm that intentionally engages youth in the process of transforming systems of confinement and education from the inside out.

F4Y operates programming weekly at the Los Prietos Boys Camp, and on a per funding basis at the Alternative Report and Resource Centers in Santa Barbara, and the Santa Maria Juvenile Hall. F4Y currently administers four programs: the 'Freedom 4 Youth Leadership Program,' WAGE$, a job training and education program, and an Ethnic Studies college course in collaboration with UCSB and SBCC at Los Prietos Boys Camp. In addition, the 'Freedom 4 Youth Advocates' is a UCSB student mentorship program that meets bi-weekly to support members of the three Freedom 4 Youth programs at Camp.

F4Y, was co-founded by the researcher and the youth at the Los Prietos Boys Camp after we had created an officially recognized Toastmasters Charter called Toastmaster Soldiers in 2009. TMS was the first public speaking chapter of its kind for youth in the child justice system and it was founded by the youth themselves out of the weekly Youth Leadership Program I started at the Los Prietos Camp in 2008. There were two classes a

week divided into two-hour time blocks, and each class had twelve members. One group was selected from the Los Prietos Boys Camp dormitory and the other group from the Los Prietos Boys Academy dormitory. The distinction between the two groups was characteristically their age, type of alleged offense, and number of commitments or previous incarcerations at the institution. Boys Academy members were typically younger members who were there for the first time. However, at times a younger member could be placed in the Boys Camp because their alleged offense was on the serious end of the spectrum. The members prepared and delivered speeches, evaluated each other, and led through chairmanship roles. The program sessions centered on communication, personal responsibility, conflict resolution, creative expression, critical thinking, healthy relationship skill-building and positive decision-making.

In 2009, when the first cohort of members was about to complete the program and graduate from their Camp commitment, they had formed what they referred to as a "brotherhood." The members decided that once they were released from Camp and returned to their communities that they wanted to continue to hold meetings and support each other. But they also wanted also bring in their family members, girlfriends, and return to Camp to support new members coming into the program at the Camp and the Academy. The members ages 15 – 18 years old decided an avenue to carry out their goals would be to form and charter an official Toastmasters Club under Toastmasters International. They brainstormed and came up with a name for the Club – the Toastmasters Soldiers. To raise money for the Toastmasters membership dues and supplies, and to support the program at Camp, the members held their first fundraiser at Pierre Lafond in Santa Barbara. 125 supporters attended to listen to the members share their stories, triumphs, and hopes for their futures.

Over the next two years Toastmasters Soldiers and the Leadership Program at the Boys Camp and Academy expanded. Grant funding was received from the Fund for Santa Barbara for the Boys Camp and Academy Leadership Programs. However, members were constrained by the Toastmasters International structure and the way the grant funding was dispersed was arduous. The members decided in order to manage the growth of the Club and better support their members that forming a nonprofit organization would be the most viable option.

In 2011, the Toastmasters Soldiers who were formerly incarcerated or impacted by the system determined they were limited in their ability being under the Toastmasters umbrella. They made the decision it would be best to evolve into their own nonprofit organization, Freedom 4 Youth 501(c)3. In 2012, youth leadership program members at Los Prietos Boys Camp and undergraduate students at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), founded the Freedom 4 Youth Advocates, a UCSB campus-based mentorship organization. As of 2018, the UCSB student mentoring program, the Freedom 4 Youth Advocates, has a cumulative total of 26,137 volunteer hours and counting.

The growth of the nonprofit organization, F4Y, occurred because the youth members requested and implemented these types of support services, such as additional mentorship, job training services, job placements, and educational support services. For example, in 2012 members of the Freedom 4 Youth Leadership Program requested additional mentorship support from University students while they were in the institution and once they were released. The members felt strongly that if they had positive peer associations and additional reinforcements that they would "do better on the outs," upon returning to their communities. Members had the idea of facilitating a Public Speaking Workshop at the University of

California, Santa Barbara. The researcher was an undergraduate at UCSB at the time and orchestrated the workshop presentation to take place in an Education Leadership class taught by Professor Don Lubach. The members facilitated the 45-minute workshop and at the end made the request for further support. That day, the members recruited the very first group of mentors from UCSB.

Freedom 4 Youth Leadership Program facilitators made up of UCSB students, also known as Freedom 4 Youth Advocates, use structured, experienced-based learning opportunities to build resilience, self-efficacy, and interpersonal skills, through modeling of communication, self-regulation techniques, and positive self-talk. UCSB undergraduates are utilized as mentors and facilitators for children in the Freedom 4 Youth Leadership Program. The program was designed to reduce recidivism rates by developing student's social emotional skills through leadership and public speaking; skills that help students gain employment and increase their educational opportunities. Further, the program was designed to increase member's self-efficacy, or belief in oneself, goal attainment, and self-control. The curriculum sought specifically to address students' self-esteem, respect for self and others by promoting tolerance, empathy and positive change.

Prior to 2014, F4Y worked primarily with males involved in the Santa Barbara County justice system. At the request of probation and to meet the current need for gender-specific programming, F4Y developed and implemented a 10-week Mentoring Program and workshops series for females in the Santa Barbara County justice system. The Mentoring Program and Workshop Series takes place at the Alternative Report and Resource Center in Santa Barbara and the Santa Maria Juvenile Hall when funding is available.

As of 2019 more than 2000 children in the Santa Barbara County Justice System have participated in F4Y programming and the on-campus organization 'Freedom 4 Youth Advocates' has grown to over 15 currently active mentors and 122 alumni mentors, who have a combined total of over 26,000 volunteer hours. Many of the Freedom 4 Youth Advocate alumni or former mentors have gone on to receive a master's degree in social work, become licensed mental health clinicians, enter teacher education programs and law schools, or join the workforce as counselors, case managers, and law enforcement officers.

F4Y leadership team members, who govern the organization, consist of youth who were formerly incarcerated (or had incarcerated family members) and alumni of Freedom 4 Youth programs, current or alumni mentors from the Freedom 4 Youth Advocates, or people have been in some way personally impacted by the justice system. Their individual experiences have motivated them to critically engage in social justice through CEL opportunities that not only empower youth to break the bonds of past limitations but also impact the systems that they are engaged in for personal and collective liberation. Freedom 4 Youth is in the business of giving every young person a chance to flourish while creating equitable and safe communities and institutions.

The important point is that the trust between Freedom 4 Youth, probation and the youth is what provides the CEL course with unique access to youth in the justice system as well as, an openness of the youth to share their personal stories.

Participants

The CEL course was implemented for undergraduate students at UCSB over the time period of April 2018 to December 2018. Sessions were conducted once per week for three hours each session over ten weeks. Undergraduate students self-selected to register for the

course and were given the option to participate in the subsequent research project. Twenty-six students participated in the weekly sessions and research project (in two different quarters, 16 and 10). The undergraduate's cultures, backgrounds, and socio-economic status varied but the majority identify as female and Latinx. The undergraduate students were primarily students of color (Latinx 66%, Black 7% and Asian 3%) and White students 24%. The weekly course discussions were predominantly among undergraduates, but also included youth in and out of the justice system, graduate students, faculty and community members.

Measures

Quantitative and qualitative instruments were used in this exploratory study. The researcher and research assistants examined demographic information, pre and post assessments (Appendix 5), weekly assignments, projects for two different courses, taught in two different semesters; *(N = 16)* former research discussion course students from spring quarter 2018 and *(N =10)* undergraduates from "Literatures in Juvenile Justice" course Fall 2018.

Quantitative Instruments

Undergraduates who participated in the research discussion course were administered pre and post assessments by research assistants. The assessments focused on their perceptions of youth in the system, experiences in their schools and broader communities, views on crime, incarceration and the justice systems in their lives and broader society along with feedback on their classroom experience. The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test was used to determine whether there was a difference in undergraduates' perceptions, based on the way they answered questions, from one point in time at baseline, to another, after the completion of the course.

Qualitative Instruments

Data was collected through pre and post assessments, weekly assignments, projects and follow-up surveys. The undergraduates received open-ended surveys and assessment questions focused on their perceptions of youth in the justice system, along with how, if at all, their experience in class impacted their perception. Undergraduates were also asked to reflect on how those changes in perception could be explained, if there were any. The undergraduates' final reflections and assessments were examined and organized in NVivo. Analysis of survey and assessment questions data then progressed inductively through the establishment of recurring themes and patterns in weekly assignments (Charmaz, 2006). A coding scheme was developed with indicative theoretical units.

These paragraphs of text were defined as units granting a more comprehensive investigation and complex analysis of each individual theme (O'Reilly, 2012). A code was assigned to each unit as a theme and those codes were assembled into a codebook. Specifically, in each individual data analysis core themes emerged that connected the "change in perception" due to these specific constructs (core values): evolution of empathy as a value, compassion for others starts with self, collective hope in action, the power of storytelling and internalizing the dominant perceptions of youth in the justice system. This resulted in concentrated coding to further examine these distinct themes (Charmaz, 2006). The codes were defined and characterized to ensure that the formation of the codes were prominent interrelationships with distinct characteristics among them (Charmaz, 2006). During the final analysis, codes were later connected. The interrelationship between theories and distinctions were analyzed. The researcher inductively coded the data and one research

assistant deductively coded the data. The core themes and the codebook were given to the research assistant and quality checks were done to assess the level of inter- rater reliability.

Procedures

At the beginning of the research discussion course, the researcher stated the purpose of the research study, discussed confidentiality and requested participation from enrolled undergraduates. Undergraduates were assured that their grades and credit for the course were not determined by their participation in the research study, and the researcher would not know who chose to participate or not.

As part of the course, undergraduates completed classroom assignments and projects, and during the research discussion course completed pre and post-assessments at the beginning and end of the quarter. The study design includes both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. The data generated as a part of the course, was examined to develop an understanding of undergraduate's perceptions, how, if at all, their perceptions changed along with what the factors were that influenced them.

The measurement of "change in perception" was achieved using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Undergraduates answered pre and post survey questions on a scale. First, undergraduates were asked how strongly they agreed with trying youth as adults, ("always," "most of the time," "some of the time," "rarely," or "none of the time.") Second, undergraduates were asked how necessary it is to keep the youth courts separate from the standard adult court: "yes, definitely," "yes, I think so," "not sure," "no, I don't think so," or "no, definitely." Connections were made by the researcher and research assistants between the pre and post assessments, weekly class assignments and projects to corroborate the hypotheses and triangulate the findings.

During both courses, youth in the justice system came to UCSB campus as guests once during the ten-week quarter from the Los Prietos Boys Camp (LPBC) facility in Santa Barbara County. The group of youth (“the Drama Kings”) are also a part of Freedom 4 Youth, and come from LPBC to UCSB campus regularly to speak in Dr. Victor Rios classes and in the Teacher Education Program. The youth did not come to the courses specifically for the purpose of research and would have participated in the courses regardless of this research study. A special request to visit the courses at UCSB was made to management at LPBC in order to obtain permission to bring the youth to campus. Adult guest speakers who are no longer incarcerated also attended the research discussion course. No data was collected from the youth at LPBC or from the adults who are no longer incarcerated during their visit to the research discussion course. In addition, undergraduate students in the courses had the opportunity to visit the LPBC with Freedom 4 Youth on several occasions, but this was not required as part of the course participation or as a participant in the research study.

In order to avoid any bias on the part of the researcher, research assistants performed all pre and post assessments, and de-identified all of the data for this study. This helps ensure that the undergraduates did not feel coerced or that there could be repercussions toward their grade due to their perceptions of the youth in the juvenile justice system. The researchers’ Institutional Review Board at the University of California, Santa Barbara approved all procedures.

Data Analysis

The study hypothesizes that undergraduates will demonstrate greater social perspective-taking and heightened awareness their ability to understand another's perspective. This is precisely the kind of attribution that forms the basis for empathy and “walking in

another's shoes," thereby increasing positive social transactions with youth in the justice system and in their communities overall. In addition, examining the strategies of language and storytelling, which inform the malleability of perceptions, can be utilized to inform practical changes in policy that flow from an empathetic point of view into education and justice systems.

During the quantitative data analysis, the data in relation to the pre and post assessments was tested for normality and the data was determined to be not normally distributed. The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test was performed as this test does not assume normality.

The qualitative portion of the study included thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998). Open coding was used in order to examine the possible analytical directives within the data (Charmaz 2006) and extract themes from patterns identified throughout the pre and post assessments and weekly assignments. This approach is beneficial because it allows the researcher to identify themes by "coding" or grouping together similar pieces of data under one main theme or category. In order to ensure validity of the surveys, a pilot survey with undergraduate students was held prior to the distribution of the surveys. The goal of the pilot survey was to assess the quality of the survey protocol, and modifications were made as needed. The trustworthiness and credibility of the findings were supported by the triangulation of the data (pre and post assessments, weekly assignments and projects), member checking and multiple research assistants who utilized a comparison approach to corroborate the hypothesis and triangulate the findings.

Chapter 4. Results

This study examined undergraduate's initial impressions of youth in the justice system, along with whether or not dominant narratives of youth in the justice system can be shifted through a community engaged learning (CEL) course. The researcher also examined strategies that may have had an impact on any perception change the undergraduates may have experienced.

The general perception of youth who are incarcerated is that they commit crimes because something is wrong with them *individually*. The cause of the *dysfunction* may be blamed on their innate psychological traits, or social and political identities (i.e. they are gang members), or the fact that these youth come from homes that are broken or communities that are impoverished. Although the perception that youth in the system come from a "broken home" or "poor community" appears to take a more situational approach that includes other factors, this dominant narrative continues to find something *wrong* with the *individual* child's "head, heart or home" (Duque, 2015). As the research indicates, this deficit perspective narrative about youth who misbehave gets told over and over again in schools, through the media, among researchers and in politics.

Quantitative Analysis

Initial Impressions

Initially, in their pre-test assessments (Appendix 5) undergraduates narrowly described the youth's psychological traits as "angry," "apathetic" and also emphasized that the youth "lack motivation," are "lost," "closed off" and are simply "bad." As indicated in Table 1 a total of 82 negative evaluations and 5 positive evaluations were used by undergraduates in their pre-assessments on the first day of the CEL course. The

undergraduates described the youth's social and political identities as "gang members," "inmates" and "prisoners." A small number of undergraduates identified societal and interactional descriptions between the youth and their "broken homes" and "poor communities." While these few students were the exception, their language still referred to the families and communities as "broken" and "poor," not citing other larger structural explanations for the challenges the youth faced or the root causes of their involvement in delinquent behavior.

Outcome Perceptions

During the post assessments (Appendix 5) at the completion of the CEL course undergraduates used 86 positive evaluations to describe the youth. Negative terms were used 7 times. The undergraduate's perspective shifted and they began using descriptors such as: "youth" and "boys" who were "just like us." Undergraduates also specifically said the youth were "not monsters" and "not bad." Additionally, the term "poverty" that was used at the outset became "low-income" and instead of "broken homes" the undergraduates said "challenging backgrounds."

Table 1

Number of negative evaluations versus positive evaluations of youth in the justice system in undergraduates pre-post assessments

	Pre-assessment	Post-assessment
Negative evaluations		
Angry	10	2
Aggressive	7	0
Apathetic	5	0
Bad	4	0
Closed off	3	0
Lack of motivation	3	0
Lost	5	2
Gang members	14	3

Inmates	3	0
Prisoners	3	0
Superpredators	3	0
Broken homes	16	0
Poverty	6	0
Total	82	7
Positive evaluations		
Boys	0	7
Youth	3	8
Kids	0	4
Kind	0	6
Talented	0	4
Just like us	0	8
Shy	0	2
Respectful	0	5
Childlike	0	3
Trauma	2	6
Not monsters	0	4
Not bad	0	5
Talented	0	6
Motivated	0	3
Low-income	0	8
Challenging backgrounds	0	7
Total	5	86

Quantitative Analysis

Social Perspective Taking

Statistical analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to determine if the hypothesis was in fact true that undergraduates demonstrated a shift in perception when responding to questions on the pre- and post-assessment (Appendix 5). Using SPSS, a Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks test was conducted to determine whether the student's perception of trying youth as adults or keeping youth and adult courts separate changed from the beginning of the course to the end. Preliminary data screening showed that the distribution of differences was not normally distributed, and

therefore a Wilcoxon test was administered. The violation of the assumption of normality could be due to the small sample size. The Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks test indicated that the pre-test ranks, changed from, "I agree rarely" to trying youth as adults and moved towards, "I agree none of the time." Although there was a move in the post-test ranks, towards agreeing that youth should be tried as adults none of the time, the move was not significant, $Z= -1.265$, $p < .206$. This is not to say that the undergraduates' perception didn't change on whether youth should be tried as adults, however, the shift in perception was not statistically significant.

The Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks test was also conducted to identify if students' perception changed on whether youth and adult courts should be kept separate. The Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks test indicated that the post-test ranks were significantly higher than the pre-test ranks, $Z = -2.646$, $p < .008$. Table 2 shows that there was a statistically significant change in students' perceptions from, "Yes, I think it is necessary to continue the youth courts separate from adults," to "Yes, definitely keep youth and adults courts separate." The undergraduates significant change from, "Yes, I think" to "Yes, definitely" indicates that there was a shift in their perspective that favored an approach to the justice system that was centered on treating youth in courts separate from adults. There is a connection here that undergraduates began to see children as children.

Table 2

Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

	Pre-Post Try Youth as Adults	Pre-Post Youth & Adult Courts Separate
Z	-1.265	-2.646
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.206	0.008

While the quantitative data was limited, there are some indications of the change in undergraduates' perceptions to more positive evaluations and increased social perspective-taking. Further studies would benefit from building off of these results in more empirically rigorous ways.

Qualitative Analysis

Initial Impressions

The dominant narrative of individual responsibility that permeates the academic and public discourse was prevalent among undergraduates in the beginning of the course. Their general perception was that the youth deserved to be incarcerated, because they committed a crime and had done something "bad."

> **Example 1:** "Even though, I have had siblings go through the juvenile justice system I still saw *a good form of disciplining youth for their bad actions*. I thought it will make them learn from their mistakes and seeing how bad it is in there they would not want to return" (Appendix 4).

This quote exemplifies how at the beginning of the course, even undergraduates who were from a Latinx cultural background and had a family member or knew someone in the justice system felt they were there because *they did something wrong*. Undergraduates understood incarceration as a benefit or "good form of disciplining youth," as though incarceration would deter youth's future "bad actions."

Outcome Perceptions

However, by the end of the course, this idea that "bad" people were incarcerated for "committing crimes" had shifted: many undergraduates refused to assign any blame to the individual who was incarcerated.

> **Example 2:** "My perception was [sic] on the juvenile justice system has drastically changed. Secluding them from the real world will only make them

think that society is against them because they are getting pushed into the system" (Appendix 4).

Example 3: "I got to see a whole different perspective that I never ever realized existed. I was narrow minded with my own believes [sic] that the youth should get punished for causing trouble and committing crimes. Also, I think the way the media and community stigmatized juvenile delinquency in such a harsh manner that it influenced my judgments towards the youth" (Appendix 4).

Example 4: "Growing up where I am from I was in a very white area and felt like I was in a bubble. Not one person I ever knew was incarcerated or was put through the system in any way, so I was never taught about it. To be honest I never really thought about it. I just thought everyone who did a bad thing got put away and that was it. Boy was I so incredibly wrong" (Appendix 4).

Qualitative Analysis

Main Themes

Analysis resulted in four themes that undergraduates identified as contributors to their change in perception, two of which clustered around individual perceptions and two around systemic/structural influences related to how their perception changed: (1) Empathy for Others starts with Self; (2) Evolution of Social Perspective-Taking or Empathy as a Value; (3) Collective Hope in Action; (4) The Power of Storytelling. A research assistant also was given the codes and reviewed the text of two weekly assignments and pre-post tests to determine interrater reliability with the researcher. If there was one word or a group of text that the code was agreed upon this counted as one point. The research assistant and the researcher agreed 70% of the time.

Theme 1: Empathy for Others starts with Self

During course activities and discussions undergraduates confronted and grappled with their own life experiences, traumas and bias. This was essential to the goal of shifting perceptions of youth in the justice system as the "other." Undergraduates continuously

referenced the importance and evolution of their emotional intelligence and self-discovery as the way forward to empathy for others from whom they formerly considered themselves quite different-- and in particular for youth in the justice system.

> **Example 5:** "This class also taught me to look into myself and my own biases and trauma and how I am not much different than the kids that are locked up today" (Appendix 4).

> **Example 6:** "This course not only reopened the closed door of my brain to the idea of jail and the individuals inside of it, it also made me more self-reflective in my everyday activities" (Appendix 4).

> **Example 7:** "Compassion requires a lot of emotional intelligence and is a very important emotion to feel because it allows us to see the humanity of others. I can only provide compassion for others when I truly step back for a bit and re-evaluate my own personal struggles" (Appendix 4).

> **Example 8:** "We must start with ourselves to be compassionate in order to give compassion. We begin to have compassion when we recognize our shared humanity" (Appendix 4).

Theme 2: Evolution of Social Perspective-Taking or Empathy as a Value

Initially, undergraduates discussed their social perspective-taking in their weekly assignments and applied that empathy to groups of people. The following undergraduates' quotes are indicative of a generalized increase in empathy for others:

> **Example 9:** "This class has helped tremendously with interacting with people overall. Due to the activities we did during class I became a better active listener and learned from others not to judge people from their actions. I have a lot of compassion for them because I realize that they are humans just like me who simply made mistakes in life" (Appendix 4).

> **Example 10:** "Seeing these boys you then realize they are like any other individual and you gain this sense of realness. We are all equal therefore we all have the capacity to experience pain, sorrow, violence, trauma etc. Only when we realize that we are equals, regardless of status, class, gender, authority, etc., can we crusade to help one another and heal" (Appendix 4).

At first the empathy was generalized, but then, as the course went on, undergraduates' perceptions evolved so that their empathy became linked to their moral code and values that

they could apply in other areas of their lives. Students recognized that being there for another person is not about feeling bad for them but being genuine and supporting them exactly where and as they are in the present moment. Undergraduates began to understand that anyone could have similar life challenges and has inherent value with something to contribute to the world no matter where they come from. This self-awareness of their empathy evolved into their moral code that they were going to apply to their lives included examples such as:

> **Example 11:** "For example, although we were introduced to Los Prietos Boys Camp at the very beginning of the course, it was not until we saw them in person that my brain registered that there were actual young men at that camp who have real lives and feelings. Now, as I tutor and mentor youth at the surrounding schools, I think of those boys and how I would have loved to have them in my classes to be an extra resource to them not just academically, but emotionally. Whenever I step foot in the classroom, I am more attentive to the behaviors of my students because of the ideas of childhood trauma and the statistics we read about young girls earlier on in the course" (Appendix 4).

> **Example 12:** "I learned that when helping someone, the helper or healer has to always be aware not to look down on the person they are helping out" (Appendix 3).

The undergraduates emphasize that empathy cannot include judgment of the other, or maintaining a superiority complex over another group that is seen as less fortunate or marginalized. The learning process is mutual.

> **Example 13:** "Being compassionate calls for us to level ourselves and not feel that we need to help someone because we are in a better position, but because you want to out of the kindness of your heart" (Appendix 3).

> **Example 14:** "The boys at Freedom 4 Youth have taught me that you can overcome adversity and have learned so much from each one of them" Appendix 3).

Theme 3: Collective Hope in Action

Many of the undergraduates discussed their enhanced knowledge of the structural barriers inherent in institutions and felt compelled to engage in collective action and hopeful that this action could about positive change. Undergraduates also made the connection between biased, negative perceptions of youth in the justice system that increased blame and punishment. Even given structural barriers, the students' perceptions of what could be possible in systems expanded. The undergraduates not only felt inspired that individuals could make a difference in the broader systems of justice and education, but also were compelled to be a part of the change.

> **Example 15:** "Before this course, I actually didn't know much at all about what was going on in America and that I, too, am a citizen that is just watching these terrible things happen. For example, I didn't vote in the most recent election because I simply just didn't care and felt as if nothing was affecting me directly so my vote didn't matter. But then I grew to understand that my vote is just as important as anyone else's because I do care about the people that are suffering directly and I want to help change as well" (Appendix 4).

> **Example 16:** "Before taking this class, I felt that anything I did couldn't really make a big difference in the broken society that we live in. However, through all the guest speakers, graduating boys going to college and the interactions with my fellow classmates my mentality changed" (Appendix 4).

> **Example 17:** "As college students we have a part to play and after taking this class I believe that most of us are left with wanting to take action. Many of the readings showed us individuals that have decided to take action and fight against the different systems we have. Even though most think that their actions won't make a difference they truly will. I really hope to make more time to volunteer with different non-profits like Freedom 4 Youth and to spread awareness of mass incarceration" (Appendix 3).

Undergraduates verbalized the importance of joining a movement, which exemplifies their expansion from focus on individual action to the value of collective action. They identified that social change doesn't magically happen only through changing personal

actions, but through the actions of the collective. Undergraduates completed the course with a sense of collective hope in positive action/ The classroom itself became a site for building community, which subsequently evolves into a collective identity and mind-set.

> **Example 18:** "I know that there is so much bad in the world happening right now, but Freedom 4 Youth along with the organizations that Scott Budnick helped create and others we have come across, gives me hope that we can overcome the bad" (Appendix 3).

> **Example 19:** "Although I want to go into higher education, I realized that I want to continue working with youth who are incarcerated because they need mentoring as well! I will begin looking into similar organizations in Los Angeles so that I can begin providing help!" (Appendix 3).

Theme 4: The Power of Storytelling

Across a number of classroom assignments and pre- and post-assessments undergraduates spoke about their experiences during the CEL course, and how their perceptions of youth and the justice system both changed. Through the coding process, it became evident that not only did the undergraduates' perceptions evolve, but undergraduates attributed these changes to the same aspects of the course that were key incidents that shaped the expansion of their perceptions of youth in the justice system.

Undergraduates referenced hearing the stories of the youth and their classmates as the key to their shift in perspective. The CEL course used ritual storytelling and story circles to support undergraduates shifting their perceptions of what constitutes suffering, isolation, and retributive justice-- not only in the justice system, but also in their own lives. Undergraduates no longer saw the traumas of youth in the justice system as separate or different from their own. Given the undergraduates' challenges and backgrounds, they started to think, "Wow, that could have been me..." (Appendix 4). Undergraduates began to see that everyone has experienced some sort of trauma, albeit at dramatically different levels. Their own trauma is

as traumatic to the undergraduates as the youth's trauma is to the youth. The power of storytelling highlighted how common trauma is and was an effective strategy to enhance empathy and ability to "walk in each other's shoes," and the actual identification that the process of empathy is happening.

There was evidence among the undergraduates in the ways that they talked about their experience in the course that storytelling leads to compassion. The undergraduates heard the youth's narratives through an in-class theatrical performance, "Drama Kings." Along with the subsequent discussion, this enabled the students recognize and engage with the youth in different ways. Once the youth shared their stories the undergraduates could no longer perceive them in a way that was different or separate from themselves. Additionally, giving undergraduates the opportunity to tell their own stories about trauma dissolved difference between themselves and the youth or the incarcerated "other."

> **Example 20:** "Instead of creating an invisible line of them and us or me and him/her it is important we are all capable of doing bad things. We all have a dark side as well as we all have the capacity for greatness" (Appendix 3).

Their perceptions of the youth had shifted, and so they saw the need for more universal shift in perspective: anyone with a different set of circumstances could be behind bars.

> **Example 21:** "Talking to the boys from Freedom 4 Youth was life changing for me. I didn't see these kids as dangerous or violent criminals. I saw them as young boys who were misunderstood by the system. I totally related to them in how they didn't like school and how they were demonized by their teachers. The only difference was I was a white girl and they were young boys of color. When I got in trouble at school, I got a slap on the wrist. They got jail time" (Appendix 4).

Additionally, undergraduates made a connection between the language they used, and their ability to forge relationships with the youth who were incarcerated. Undergraduates

used new words to describe the youth as "full of hopes and dreams" and made room for new relationships because they started to see they youth as receptive and "actually want help":

> **Example 22:** "One of the biggest and most influential things I learned is that youth who are incarcerated actually *want* mentorship. For a long time, I believed that they were very reluctant to get help from outsiders who are not or have not been incarcerated" (Appendix 4).

> **Example 23:** "After visiting the Camp and creating a relationship with the boys, I realized that they indeed want help and have actually asked for people to come help mentor them" (Appendix 3).

They also saw how shifting perspective and language choice could provide a sense of humanization and offer real solutions to challenges within the justice system among the youth and staff.

> **Example 24:** "When we recognize that we are all human, we are often more able to build personal connections with people who are or were incarcerated and a solution to many problems within the legal system" (Appendix 3).

> **Example 25:** "We can see how compassion can lead to ways of thinking that actually help the youth because we do not take away their humanity, we emphasize it" (Appendix 3).

> **Example 26:** "When speaking to the boys, they mentioned that they looked up to some of the staff and seen them as positive role models. When staff humanizes the boys, they are more likely to lead them into a positive light and rehabilitate them" (Appendix 3).

> **Example 27:** "Humanizing the boys is a critical component in order to help the boys to feel humanized and not like criminals so they can see themselves in a new way. Being able to connect with them and make them see themselves with potential is so beneficial to their futures" (Appendix 3).

The reflections from the undergraduates indicate that a change was made in not only perceptions of what constitutes criminal behavior but also in the language used to describe children in the justice system. Undergraduates also emphasized the importance of shifting descriptive language of youth in the justice system through the stories that are told in order to impact systemic change overall.

> **Example 28:** "I have grown to realize throughout this course there needs to be a different outlook on those within the system in order for their [sic] to actually be long-term change. By learning about these issues and how the systems in America are so fractured, I have actually been able to participate and give my own input upon true problems in America" (Appendix 3).

Undergraduates expressed that hearing the youth's stories and sharing stories with each other not only increased their empathy and understanding but also was therapeutic and healing on a personal level.

> **Example 29:** "Hearing a little bit of their own personal stories has definitely inspired me, because I know it is so hard to open up, I can only imagine how much they have faced in life at such a young age that it is extremely hard to let people in. When we would share our own personal experiences during our go-arounds it was scary and intimidating. I felt like I would get judged. The things I had shared in that class were so personal and no one close to me have heard these things come out of me before, but releasing those personal experiences made me face my fears and helped become stronger person" (Appendix 4).

> **Example 30:** "I have never felt so close to classmates and I feel like I was able to learn as well as get another perspective of how life can be for certain people. There were so many interesting people that had more than a single story. By each person telling their own story during discussion it was obvious to see how each of us individuals [sic] have more than one story to tell. Many people do not see past an individual being in the Juvenile justice system, which is sad because these people are more than what society makes them out to be. Most are brilliant individuals that haven't been mentored or handed the right deck of cards" (Appendix 4).

> **Example 31:** "I was very grateful to hear everyone's stories when we went around the room. It reminded me that we don't know what people go through. It is refreshing to know that you are not alone. My favorite experience was when the boys from the camp came and performed. That was so moving to me. I literally just wanted to sit each one down and talk to them about life and hear them out. That is what I loved about the message of this class too; how important stories are. We never know what people go through, but when you dissect it, you can get answers to why they react to things they do, why they say things they do, etc. It is true with every single person on this planet. Everyone has a story, and sometimes they just need to be told and that is what our justice system does not understand" (Appendix 4).

In the weekly reflections, undergraduates illuminated the significance of listening to each other's stories, stories of the youth in the system of incarceration or of their peers in the

systems of education. Listening to others allowed them to feel empathy and to think of themselves as "walking in another's shoes."

> **Example 32:** "When we are able to stop judging others based on actions and are able to think of ourselves in others shoes and empathized with what they have gone through we are able to better understand one another" (Appendix 3).

> **Example 33:** "Hearing the boys tell their story through a play was very powerful, it brought tears to my eyes when they read their letters to their younger selves. No child should be driven to choose the streets instead of their own homes and this is a very sad reality that many people forget about. Everyone is always so quick to judge the lives of these children without caring to find out what made them choose this path" (Appendix 3).

Storytelling became the mechanism in which undergraduates increased their ability to empathize with youth in the justice system and enhance their awareness of their own trauma in relation to the youth's trauma. Undergraduates also developed multiple narratives or "counter-narratives" with insights into systemic oppression.

Internalizing Dominant Perceptions of Youth in the Justice System

Despite the change in perspective for many students, for some moving away from the dominant narrative of "individual responsibility and culpability" remained difficult. Bias is ingrained in our perceptions of systems of education and incarceration. This directs the ways in which people perceive youth "misbehavior," and subsequently informs what methods are utilized (and approved of) to manage those behaviors. Even after the youth visited the class and shared their stories, some undergraduates did not move away from the entrenched narrative of personal responsibility which could be indicative of the difficulty for some to move away from dominant narratives that are deeply entrenched in our society. After the youth's performance an undergraduate shared how the youth were still individually responsible for their actions and the harm they cause:

> **Example 34:** "As they acknowledge the things they did that got them locked up. To add to that they also acknowledge how their activities can even worsen if they don't change the way they act. In the performance they act up a scene where one of the boys kills another boy because he is against gangs. As a result, they play out the scene of the funeral and how hurt loved ones are due to the tragic death. In addition, the person that killed him is reminiscent of what he did and the consequences that are in placed due to his actions. By them performing this act I feel that the boys understand where they are coming from and how they can hurt their loved ones by their actions" (Appendix 3).

While a few undergraduates described their newfound ability to empathize with future students who might be engaged in *perceived* "misbehavior" their solutions were still individual in nature. Their solutions were notably absent of any culpability placed on the education and justice systems themselves, or urgency to rethink policies and institutions that punish.

> **Example 35:** "I want to be the type of teacher that not only teaches them what is required by the state of California, but also teach them about how important it is to love yourself and want the best for yourself" (Appendix 3).

> **Example 36:** "I want to be the person who believes in them no matter what they are going through and show them that they are not alone and that it is okay to feel lost as long as they are trying to find the right path for them. *That it is never too late to change for the good*, that there is still SOOO much ahead of them and what they are going through right now can and will be healed."

Although it was hypothesized that there would be a greater critique of the systems themselves, there was still an emphasis on the individual, albeit this time focused on the necessity to love and support children in our communities versus incarcerate them.

Chapter 5. Discussion

"Instead of asking whether or anyone should be locked up or go free, why don't we think about why we solve problems by repeating [behavior] that brought us the problem in the first place? ~Ruth Wilson Gilmore

The study's findings illustrated that many undergraduates initially used narrow and common negative descriptive language when referring to youth in the justice system, which was used as the baseline measurement for whether or not their perceptions changed. Over time, undergraduates' perceptions of youth shifted to more positive evaluations, in the ways that were hypothesized. This was due both to direct exposure to youth in the justice system along with the structure/content of the course. By the end of the course, undergraduates had shifted their descriptive language of youth in the system to a person-first, more inclusive and positive evaluations.

As we have seen from the undergraduate's initial descriptions of the youth in the justice system, descriptive language of "angry," "bad," "gang member" and "superpredator" arises from the perception that punishing the individual is the only foreseeable way to manage them. Subsequently, laws, policies and systems have been focused on using force and incarceration as a deterrent to keep these "bad individuals" from engaging in "anti-social"/ "delinquent" behaviors. This foundational and deeply rooted bias, particularly against children of color has been with us for hundreds of years and will not easily be abandoned. However, hysteria and stereotypes do not produce deterrent solutions that work or allow for fair and effective policies and institutions.

The post-assessments showed the undergraduates descriptive language had shifted towards a more positive evaluation that pointed toward restoration versus retribution. Undergraduates cited how storytelling has the power to change negative dominant narratives

about youth in the justice system to counter-narratives that do not demonize. The overwhelming majority of the students referenced the time that they spent listening to the personal stories of the youth and their fellow classmates as the point where their perceptions began to change. Students discussed how the assumptions they had about who enters the justice system began to erode and they found ways to humanize the youth and each other. The initial biases the students had towards youth in the system began to fall off as their perceptions expanded. Through the youth's stories it became possible for the students to see them without ascribing condemning labels. It's all about the language we use and the stories we tell - it's time to use different language and tell others stories.

When a person (in this case, an undergraduate) has only minimal grasp of how youth wind up in the justice system in the first place, two logical consequences are common: negative assumptions about the youth in the justice system and support for punitive discipline policies that punish children and blame the individual. This type of in-group / out-group designation between the undergraduates and youth in the justice system further perpetuates the stereotype of "the other," as though undergraduates' identities of "me"/"we"/"us" are fundamentally separate from identities of youth in the justice system, referred to as "them"/"they." This shows that perceptions at the highest level of abstraction, when you are speaking about people in theory, rather than as "real people" that you know, remain localized - the problem is with the youth.

Through the different story circles and sharing of their own personal traumas, the undergraduates began to see themselves in the youth. This type of story circle learning may have provided the vehicle for undergraduates to walk a mile in the youth's shoes and increase their empathy for the perceived "other." The evolution of the undergraduate's empathy was

evident not only towards the youth as individuals but towards any group of people the undergraduates were working with. The increased empathy was not only towards youth in the justice system but became a part of the undergraduate's moral code and they became more self-aware of this enhanced empathy and spoke of applying this to other areas of their lives and with other people whom they came into contact with.

The dominant narrative of individual responsibility and that only "bad" children are incarcerated began to shift. The undergraduates specifically stated that they had an increased understanding of the counter-narrative and systems approach to understanding incarceration. Undergraduates admitted initially feeling powerless to impact a system of such deeply rooted structural and institutional bias. However, by the end of the course undergraduates cited examples of hope in the collective action with others. Undergraduates stated that they walked away from the course, not only feeling that individuals could make a difference in the justice system, but also felt compelled to get involved and contribute to the change. The classroom itself became a site for building connection and community and making a difference in the justice system.

Based on the undergraduate's reflections and assignments, the specific parts of the course that stood out as impactful were: 1) The sharing of personal stories (storytelling), 2) interaction with youth from Los Prietos Boys Camps 3) learning historical context of the system 4) increased self-reflection. Undergraduates expressed that hearing the youth's stories and sharing their own, had an impact on their level of empathy for others and provided a sense of human connection that they hadn't experienced in other courses. This level of self-reflection was cited by the undergraduates as therapeutic and healing.

The results are not based on social desirability because undergraduates actually showed up weekly and participated at a high level in course activities. undergraduates stated they saw value in the course. There was also an emphasis on sharing stories and perspectives without a highly structured agenda or prompt of what stories to share. There were no rules about what the undergraduates had to share and they chose to share their own personal traumas and stories at their own discretion not to please the teacher. This was evidenced by the personal nature of the undergraduate's stories with no prompt from the teacher. The youth's stories were also very personal and perhaps this is why the undergraduates felt compelled to be vulnerable and share their traumas as well.

Despite the shift in perceptions of the undergraduates from individual attributions to increased situational attributions, there were some undergraduates who continued to describe the youth as "inmates" in their final class presentations and reflections. The dominant narrative of individual responsibility remained steadfast for some undergraduates and solutions for youth who were incarcerated remained in managing their individual culpability. Although some undergraduates highlighted a critique of education and justice systems that are inherent with structural and institutional bias, there remained an emphasis on the individual.

The themes presented in this study illustrate that dismantling the infrastructure that allows for children who misbehave to be treated as "bad" will require efforts to internalize the counter-narrative of structural accountability. The historical truths about the horrific treatment of children of color by politicians, law enforcement, educators and the general public at large, will have to be confronted in order to achieve compassion and equity in and outside the justice system. Undergraduates cited the necessity of engaging in public

compassion, to expand perceptions and move beyond in-group bias to see "the other" as "just like us" (i.e. walking in another's shoes) before we can gain momentum to change punitive laws and reimagine sustainable education and justice systems entirely. When evolution in how we understand the system [that it is not keeping us safer, but keeping us all oppressed] and when we can see those within it as deserving of empathy and investment, there is impetus to implement new restorative systems, because they benefit all of us. This framework can guide us toward creating more cost-effective systems that do not perpetuate social inequalities and provide resolutions that are not psychologically damaging.

Policymakers and governments must also take responsibility for the decisions that have been made that have substantially under-funded public education, resulting in under-performing urban schools, high dropout rates and low graduation rates. Significant restrictions have also been placed on access to medical and psychiatric care for people living in poverty, which results in the justice system being a dumping ground for "problem" or "bad" children and adults. The justice system has been placed in the position of cleaning up the effects of education and mental health care failures; it is not set up for this and is particularly ill-equipped to do so. All involved in the government, administration, management, supervision, authority and execution of justice systems, along with academics, educators, administrators, community-based organizations, parents, youth and society at large share the obligation and responsibility for recidivism reduction and systemic change. It is time to stop the socially-acceptable criminalization of childhood in America.

The damage of collective neglect of youth in the justice system can never be undone. But moving forward, perceptions can evolve through storytelling and thereby, increase social perspective-taking, empathy and awareness of structural challenges so that policies can be

empathetic and humanizing, in order to protect, valorize and support children. When we practice telling and listening to stories, rather than arguing with each other, we can find a common ground and real change is possible in the justice and education systems.

Assumptions, Limitations and Delimitations

The traditional limitations researchers methodically repeat are also true for this study. There were limitations due to the investigation of undergraduate's perceptions at one California University in two specific courses. There are also a limited number of undergraduates enrolled: only 42 in Spring and Fall Quarter 2018 combined. This resulted in a modest number of participants in the study *(N = 26)*. Plus, the process of recruitment and retention for the study was from a self-selected group of undergraduates who signed up for the courses: *Working with Youth in the Juvenile Justice System* and *Literatures in Juvenile Justice: Theory to Practice*. The academic department that offers the course had an impact on which undergraduates knew about it and enrolled. The first incarnation of the class was in Education Department and attracted undergraduates from certain majors, Sociology in particular, who already possessed a systems understanding; thus, the course itself may have had a lesser impact on the degree of change because they already used this framework by training. The second incarnation of the course was in the Comparative Literature Department and as such attracted students with different majors: Comparative Literature, Physics, Economics, History, Spanish. This difference may have impacted the data or change in perception more dramatically as by comparison these undergraduates weren't as familiar with the systems framework and in future studies it would make sense to examine the major variable further. In addition, there were a number of undergraduates in both classes that shared similar ethnic and community backgrounds to each other and the youth.

Undergraduates from similar cultural and environmental backgrounds may yield certain kinds of personal experiences or preconceived notions about youth who are incarcerated, which can have an impact on whether or not their perceptions shifted about the justice system and who winds up there. However, the study did not seek to examine, as a primary objective, influences of sex, race, socio-economic status or major on any change in perceptions and these would each be important variables to examine in future studies. The study also did not evaluate other probable causes for change in perceptions such as new information or unfamiliar emotions that could cloud undergraduates' judgments. When new information is presented to the contrary, feelings might change, and individual's perspective becomes clearer. Going forward, the data gathered from this exploratory retrospective cohort study will play an important role in future experimental designs. In more rigorous studies and effect size can be measured in order to describe the strength of association or non-independence between participation or non-participation in the CEL course and change in perceptions of youth in the justice system. Although there is no such thing as a validated measure (Gehlbach, 2015), future studies would benefit from a way to measure a clear change in empathy. If the increase in empathy could be measured in a rigorous way that could provide additional insight into the effectiveness of strategies that promote empathy.

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Zigler, E., Taussig, C., & Black, K. (1992). Early childhood intervention: a promising preventative for juvenile delinquency. *American psychologist*, *47*(8), 997.

Zigler, E., & Valentine, J. (1979). Project Head Start: A Legacy of the War on Poverty.

Zimring, F. E. (1998). Toward a jurisprudence of youth violence. *Crime and Justice*, *24*, 477-501.

Appendix 1.

Working with Youth in Juvenile Justice System Syllabus
Course Code ED199RA
1:30-4:30pm Friday
ED 1207

Instructor on Record: Hunter Gehlbach	**Teaching Associate: Billi Jo Starr, MA, PhD (c)**
E: hgehlbach@ucsb.edu P: (805) 893-3385	**E:** bjstarr@ucsb.edu P: (805) 689-3755
Teaching Associate: Meghann Newell, MSW	**Research & Teaching Assistant: Desiree Pacheco**
E: meghann@freedom4youth.org	**E: desireepacheco@umail.ucsb.edu** P: (310) 967-9734

PURPOSE:
This course is designed to build knowledge and skills that empower you to create heightened success in your education and career paths as they relate to youth and the juvenile justice system (JJS).

In the coming ten weeks, you will acquire historical knowledge of the juvenile justice system, as well as several evidence-based strategies for building enhanced academic, professional, and personal wellness. We will utilize guided "Critical Reflections" to explore readings and strategies, and as an additional bonus, you will learn to express yourself more efficiently and effectively orally and in your writing.

READINGS:
Readings will be assigned and posted through Gauchospace – it's important that you check Gauchospace regularly for additional reading materials.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
Through the readings, critical reflections and responses, along with participation in the various in
class activities, guest speaker lectures and by completing the course projects you will understand:

· History, goals & objectives of the JJS

· How life events & social conditions (risk and protective factors) contribute to or decrease delinquency

· How to develop & evaluate education / direct service interventions with youth in the JJS

· Create & sustain healthy supportive environments through community collaborations with youth & families

· How to critically examine policy efforts as they relate to youth populations

· Effectively communicate the challenges facing youth in the JJS and possible solutions

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course critically examines youth delinquency along with the history and practice of the juvenile justice system in the United States. Students will be exposed to theories that guide the understanding and development of delinquency within the context of individuals, families and communities. Understanding the instruments that play into delinquency is important for educators, social workers and other professionals, as this understanding can directly inform the policies and practices of the juvenile justice system. This course will focus on some of the most pressing issues that face the youth within the system. Such issues include adolescent brain development, poverty, child maltreatment, substance abuse, mental health, disproportionate minority contact (DMC), incarceration, peer relationships, the school to prison pipeline, evidence based interventions and the role of ideology in juvenile justice policy. Through interactive strategies and hands-on programming with youth in the juvenile justice system students will learn and practice evidence-based social, emotional, and cognitive skills that are known to enhance well being. The course is designed for students interested in working in juvenile justice settings or students interested in working with youth populations that may experience contact with the justice system.

COURSE PROJECTS:

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS	PERCENTAGE	DUE DATE
Weekly Critical Reflections & Responses	20%	Weekly on Gauchospace
Special Project	25%	Week 6
Group Presentation	20%	Week 8 or 9
Final Reflection Paper	10%	Week 10
Class Participation in Discussions	15%	Daily
Attendance	10%	Daily
Total	100%	

Attendance is mandatory at all lectures. Students may miss one lecture without losing points if they contact the instructor before the beginning of that meeting.

Discussion Participation (points will be assigned based on the following criteria)

1. Does the student facilitate the understanding of others in the group?
2. Does the student risk talking about his or her own process of academic & personal exploration?
3. Is the student punctual? And attend regularly?
4. Does the student take part in-group discussions?
5. Does the student initiate ideas?
6. Does the student ask relevant questions?

7. Does the student present new material?

Work Guidelines

- You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the your "Critical Reflections" and readings for that week. The discussions and activities will be based on the readings and remember your participation is part of your grade.
- The three major projects (1. Special Project 2. Group Presentation 3. Final Reflection Paper) will be submitted to your instructor using GauchoSpace. These assignments **will be graded for neatness, spelling, and grammar, as well as creativity and content**.
- All assignment descriptions are on GauchoSpace. You are responsible for understanding the requirements of all assignments, and asking questions in class/discussion to clarify.
- You are responsible for knowing and meeting the rubric criteria for the three major assignments. Rubrics are provided with the explanation of each assignment on GauchoSpace.
- Work that is handed in past the deadline:

a. 1 to 6 days late will be penalized 5 points.
b. Later than 6 days will be penalized an additional 5 points for each week.

- **Accommodations will be made for students that may require additional support services due to learning challenges. Please contact the instructor within the first two weeks of the quarter.**

Overview of Lecture/Discussion Topics

WEEK ONE
Friday 4/6 Lecture: **1:30-3:00pm**
Introduction to the Juvenile Justice System

Excerpts of Readings:

Davis, A. Y. (2003). Are prisons obsolete? New York: Seven Stories Press.

Alexander, M. (2010). The New Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness. New York, NY: The New Press.

Rios, V. (2011). *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys*. New York: New York University Press.

Activity: **3:00-4:30pm**
Assess yourself - becoming an active learner
Understanding the culture of JJS & culture of sanctions and punishment
Explore, discuss and challenge beliefs about the JJS

Homework: Explore Gauchospace
CRITICAL REFLECTIONS & RESPONSES #1
Readings for 4/13 for Discussion
CRITICAL REFLECTIONS & RESPONSES #2

WEEK TWO
Friday 4/13 Lecture: **1:30-3:00pm** 5
Theories of Crime and Delinquency

Excerpts of Readings:

Agnew, R. (2001) Building on the Foundation of General Strain Theory: Specifying the Types of Strain Most Likely to Lead to Crime and Delinquency. Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency.

Catalano, R.F., & Hawkins, J.D. (1996). The social development model: A theory of antisocial behavior. In J.D. Hawkins (Ed.), *Delinquency and crime: Current theories* (pp. 149-197). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Sampson, Robert J. & Laub, J. (1997) A Life-Course Theory of Cumulative Disadvantage and the Stability of Delinquency. Pp. 133-161 in Developmental Theories of Crime and Delinquency. (Advances in Criminological Theory, Volume 7), edited by Terence P. Thornberry. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.

Gottfredson, M. R., & Hirschi, T. (2006). A general theory of crime. In F. T. Cullen and R. Agnew (Eds.),*Criminological theory: Past to present: Essential Readings* (pp. 228–240). Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury Publishing Company.

Maruna, S. (2001). *Making good – how ex-convicts reform and re-build their lives.* American Psychological Association. Michigan: Edwards Brothers.

Activity: **3:00-4:30pm**
Understanding the culture of deviance
Employing critical thinking & constructing logical arguments

Homework: Check Gauchospace for additional readings and handouts
Readings for 4/20 for Discussion
CRITICAL REFLECTION & RESPONSE #3
Special Project Passed Out – Choose Project

WEEK THREE
Friday 4/20 Lecture: **1:30-3:00pm**
Children in the Juvenile Justice System

Excerpts of Readings:
Duncan, G. J., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (Eds.). (1997). *Consequences of growing up poor*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Chesney-Lind, M., & Sheldon, R. (2014) The extent of female delinquency. Chapter 1.

Cauffman, E. (2008) Understanding the Female Offender. The Future of Children.

Werner, E. E., & Smith, R. S. (1982). *Vulnerable but invincible: A longitudinal study of resilient children and youth*. New York: Adams, Bannister, & Cox.

Activity **3:00-4:30pm**
Active listening in professional and personal lives

Homework: Check Gauchospace for additional readings and handouts
Readings for 4/27 for Discussion
CRITICAL REFLECTION & RESPONSE #4
Carry Out and Finalize Special Project

WEEK FOUR
Friday 4/27 Lecture: **1:30-3:00pm** ***SPECIAL PROJECT DUE***
Neuroscience, Trauma, Adverse Life Events and Offending

Excerpts of Readings:

Cohen, J.A., Mannarino, A.P., Kleithermes, M., Murray, L.A. (2012). Trauma-focused CBT for youth with complex trauma. Child Abuse and Neglect, 36, 528-541.

Cook, A., et. Al., (2005) Complex Trauma in Children and Adolescents. Psychiatric Annals, 35(5).

Fraser, M.W. (Ed.). (2004). *Risk and resilience in childhood: An ecological perspective* (2nd ed.). Washington, D.C.: NASW Press.

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2015) The Prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) in the Lives of Juvenile Offenders.

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2014) Assessing Exposure to Psychological Trauma and Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms in the Juvenile Justice Population.

Administrative Office of California Courts (2014) The Effects of Complex Trauma on Youth: Implications for School Discipline and Court Involved Youth.

Activity **3:00-4:30pm**
Emotional Intelligence
Reducing Stress & Designing a Self-Care Plan

Homework: Check Gauchospace for additional readings and handouts
Readings for 5/4 for Discussion
CRITICAL REFLECTION & RESPONSE #5

WEEK FIVE
Friday 5/4 Lecture: **1:30-3:00pm**
Education and the Juvenile Justice System: Part 1 - Alternative Education Settings

Excerpts of Readings:

Leone, P. E., & Cutting, C. A. (2004). Appropriate education, juvenile corrections, and no child left behind. *Behavioral Disorders*, 29, 260–265.

Leone, P. E., Krezmien, M. P., Mason, L., & Meisel, S. M. (2005). Organizing and delivering empirically based literacy instruction to incarcerated youth. *Exceptionality*,13, 89–102.

Lecture: **3:00-4:30pm**
Education and the Juvenile Justice System: Part 2 - The School to Prison Pipeline

Excerpts of Readings:

Okonofua, J. A., & Eberhardt, J. L. (2015). Two strikes: Race and the disciplining of young students. Psychological Science, 26(5), 617–624

Skiba, R.J., Michael, R.S., Nardo, A.C. & Peterson, R. (2002) The Color of Discipline: Sources of Racial and Gender Disproportionality in School Punishment. The Urban Review.

Skiba, R., & Rausch, M. K. (2006). Zero tolerance, suspension, and expulsion: Questions of equity and effectiveness. In C. M. Evertson & C. S. Weinstein (Eds.), Handbook of classroom management: Research, practice, and contemporary issues (pp. 1063-1092). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Homework: Check Gauchospace for additional readings and handouts
Readings for 5/11 for Discussion
CRITICAL REFLECTION & RESPONSE #6
INTRODUCE GROUP PROJECT/SET GROUPS

WEEK SIX
Friday 5/11 Lecture: **1:30-3:00pm**
Evidence Based Practice – Part 1

Excerpts of Readings:

Hawkins, J. D., Catalano, R. E, Morrison, D. M., O'Donnell, J., Abbot, R. D., & Day, L. E. (1992). The Seattle Social Development Project: Effects of the first four years on protective factors and problem behavior. In J. McCord & R. E. Tremblay (Eds.), *Preventing antisocial behavior: Interventions from birth through adolescence* (pp.139-161). New York: Guilford Press.

Howell, J., et al., (2014) A Handbook for Juvenile Justice Systems, Chapter 4: Effective Evidence Based Prevention and Intervention Programs for Juvenile Offenders.

Lipsey, M. (2009) The Primary Factors that Characterize Effective Interventions with Juvenile Offenders: A Meta-Analytic Overview. Victims and Offenders, 4, 124-147.

Martinson, R. (1974). What Works? - Questions and Answers About Prison Reform, *The Public Interest, 35: 22-54.*

Nation, M., Crusto, C., Wandersman, A., Kumpfer, K. L., Seybolt, D., Morrissey-Kane, E., & Davino, K. (2003). What works in prevention: Principles of effective prevention programs. *American Psychologist, 58*, 449–456.

Activity: **3:00-4:30pm**
Assess Yourself
Creating a self-management & rewards system
Developing self-discipline & staying focused
Celebrating your successes and talents & creating a success identity

Homework: Check Gauchospace for additional readings and handouts
Readings for 5/18 for Discussion
CRITICAL REFLECTION & RESPONSE #7
GROUP PROJECT

WEEK SEVEN
Friday 5/18 Lecture: **1:30-3:00pm**
Evidence Based Practice – Part 2

Excerpts of Readings:

Callahan, L., Cocozza, J., Steadman, H. J., & Tillman, S. (2012). A National Survey of U.S. Juvenile Mental Health Courts. Psychiatric Services, 63(2), 130–134.

Celinska, K., Furrer, S., & Cheng, C.-C. (2013). An outcome-based evaluation of Functional Family Therapy for youth with behavior problems. OJJDP Journal of Juvenile Justice, 2(2), 23-36.

Jolliffe, D. & Farrington, D. (2007). A systematic review of the national and international evidence on the effectiveness of interventions with violent offenders. Ministry of Justice Research Series 16/07 December 2007. Retrieved from: http://www.crim.cam.ac.uk/people/academic_research/david_farrington/violmoj.pdf

Kim, S., Crutchfield, C., Williams, C., & Hepler, N. (1998). Toward a new paradigm in substance abuse and other problem behavior prevention for youth: Youth development and empowerment approach. *Journal of Drug Education*, 28(1), 1-17.

Pentz, M. A. (2003). Evidence-based prevention: Characteristics, impact, and future direction. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs, 35*(Special Suppl.), 143–152.

Activity: **3:00-4:30pm**
Motivational interviewing and The Wheel of Change

Homework: Check Gauchospace for additional readings and handouts
Readings for 5/25 for Discussion
CRITICAL REFLECTION & RESPONSE #8
GROUP PROJECT

WEEK EIGHT
Friday 5/25 Lecture: **1:30-3:00pm**
Creating Systematic Change in the Juvenile Justice System

Zeldin, S., Camino, L., & Calvert, M. (2003). Toward an understanding of youth in community governance: Policy priorities and research directions. Social Policy Report: Giving Child and Youth Development Knowledge Away, 17(3), 1-20.

Activity: **3:00-4:30pm** ***GROUP PRESENTATIONS***
Groups will be presenting as part of the requirements for the "FINAL"

Homework: Check Gauchospace for additional readings and handouts
GROUP PROJECT
FINAL REFLECTION

WEEK NINE
Friday 6/1 Activity: **1:30-3:00pm** ***GROUP PRESENTATIONS***
Groups will be presenting as part of the requirements for the "FINAL"

Activity: **3:00-4:30pm** ***GROUP PRESENTATIONS***
Groups will be presenting as part of the requirements for the "FINAL"

FINAL DUE 6/8: FINAL REFLECTION

WEEK TEN
Friday 6/8 Activity: **1:30-4:30pm**
Assess again!
Discuss course, evaluations and provide feedback

FINAL DUE 6/8: IN PERSON TURN IN FINAL REFLECTION

Appendix 2.

Literatures of the Juvenile Justice System; Theory into Practice
Course Code: C LIT 185JJ
1-3:50pm
Location Phelps Hall 5309

Rick Benjamin	Billi Jo Starr, MA, PhD (c)
E: rbenjamin@ltsc.ucsb.edu P: (401) 378-2891	**E:** bjstarr@ucsb.edu P: (805) 689-3755
Teaching Associate: Meghann Newell, MSW	**Research Assistant: Dylan Griffith**
E: meghann@freedom4youth.org	**E:** dylan@freedom4youth.org

PURPOSE:
This course is designed to build knowledge and skills that empower you to create heightened success in your education and career paths as they relate to youth and the juvenile justice system (JJS). Students in the course will be reading a range of materials from multiple genres, among them fiction and non-fiction, critical race theory, poetry & plays (among other offerings), while forming mentoring relationships with youth at Los Prietos Boys Camp & writing about both their academic inquiries & experiences with community practice. In the coming ten weeks, you will acquire historical knowledge of the juvenile justice system, as well as hands on experience with youth in the juvenile justice system applying several evidence-based strategies for building enhanced academic, professional, and personal wellness. We will utilize guided "Critical Reflections" to explore readings and strategies, and as an additional bonus, you will learn to express yourself more efficiently and effectively orally and in your writing.

READINGS:
Readings will be assigned and posted through Gauchospace – it's important that you check Gauchospace regularly for additional reading materials.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
Through the readings, critical reflections and responses, along with participation in the various in
class activities, guest speakers, discussions and by completing course projects you will understand:

· History, goals & objectives of the JJS

· How life events & social conditions (risk and protective factors) contribute to or decrease delinquency

· How to develop & evaluate education / direct service interventions with youth in the JJS

· Create & sustain healthy supportive environments through community collaborations with youth & families

· How to critically examine policy efforts as they relate to youth populations

· Effectively communicate the challenges facing youth in the JJS and possible solutions

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course critically examines youth delinquency along with the history and practice of the juvenile justice system in the United States. Students will be exposed to readings, theories and guest speakers that guide the understanding and development of delinquency within the context of individuals, families and communities. Understanding the instruments that play into delinquency is important for educators, social workers, law enforcement and other professionals, as this understanding can directly inform the policies and practices of the juvenile justice system. This course will focus on some of the most pressing issues that face the youth within the system. Such issues include adolescent brain development, poverty, child maltreatment, substance abuse, mental health, disproportionate minority contact (DMC), incarceration, peer relationships, the school to prison pipeline, evidence-based interventions and the role of ideology in juvenile justice policy. Through interactive strategies and hands-on programming with youth in the juvenile justice system students will learn and practice evidence-based social, emotional, and cognitive skills that are known to enhance well being. The course is designed for students interested in working in juvenile justice settings or students interested in working with youth populations that may experience contact with the justice system.

COURSE PROJECTS:

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS	**PERCENTAGE**	**DUE DATE**
Weekly Critical Reflections & Responses	20%	Weekly on Gauchospace
Special Project	25%	Week 6
Group Presentation	20%	Week 8 or 9
Final Reflection Paper	10%	Week 10
Class Participation in Discussions	15%	Daily
Attendance	10%	Daily
Total	100%	

Attendance is mandatory at all class discussions. Students may miss one class discussions without losing points if they contact the instructor before the beginning of that meeting.

Discussion Participation (points will be assigned based on the following criteria)

1. Does the student facilitate the understanding of others in the group? Risk talking about his or her own process of academic & personal exploration?
2. Is the student punctual? And attend regularly?
3. Does the student take part in-group discussions, initiate ideas, ask relevant questions, present new material?

Work Guidelines

- You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the your "Critical Reflections" and readings for that week. The discussions and activities will be based on the readings and remember your participation is part of your grade.
- The three major projects (1. Special Project 2. Group Presentation 3. Final Reflection Paper) will be submitted to your instructor using GauchoSpace.
- All assignment descriptions are on GauchoSpace. You are responsible for understanding the requirements of all assignments, and asking questions in class/discussion to clarify.
- You are responsible for knowing and meeting the rubric criteria for the three major assignments. Rubrics are provided with the explanation of each assignment on GauchoSpace.
- Work that is handed in past the deadline:

c. Discuss with us.

- **Accommodations will be made for students that may require additional support services due to learning challenges. Please contact the instructor within the first two weeks of the quarter.**

Overview of Discussion Topics

WEEK ONE
Wednesday 10/3 Discussion: **1:00-2:30pm**
Introduction to the Juvenile Justice System

Excerpts of Readings:

Davis, A. Y. (2003). Are prisons obsolete? New York: Seven Stories Press.

Alexander, M. (2010). The New Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness. New York, NY: The New Press.

Rios, V. (2011). *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys*. New York: New York University Press.

Activity: **2:30-3:50pm**
Understanding the culture of JJS & culture of sanctions and punishment
Explore, discuss and challenge beliefs/assumptions about the JJS

Homework: Explore Gauchospace
CRITICAL REFLECTIONS & RESPONSES #1
Readings for 10/10 Discussion

WEEK TWO
Wednesday 10/10 Discussion: **1:00-2:30pm** 5
Theories of Crime and Delinquency

Excerpts of Readings:

Agnew, R. (2001) Building on the Foundation of General Strain Theory: Specifying

the Types of Strain Most Likely to Lead to Crime and Delinquency. Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency.

Catalano, R.F., & Hawkins, J.D. (1996). The social development model: A theory of antisocial behavior. In J.D. Hawkins (Ed.), *Delinquency and crime: Current theories* (pp. 149-197). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Sampson, Robert J. & Laub, J. (1997) A Life-Course Theory of Cumulative Disadvantage and the Stability of Delinquency. Pp. 133-161 in Developmental Theories of Crime and Delinquency. (Advances in Criminological Theory, Volume 7), edited by Terence P. Thornberry. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.

Gottfredson, M. R., & Hirschi, T. (2006). A general theory of crime. In F. T. Cullen and R. Agnew (Eds.),*Criminological theory: Past to present: Essential Readings* (pp. 228–240). Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury Publishing Company.

Maruna, S. (2001). *Making good – how ex-convicts reform and re-build their lives.* American Psychological Association. Michigan: Edwards Brothers.

Activity: **2:30-3:50pm**
Understanding the culture of deviance
Employing critical thinking & constructing logical arguments

Homework: Check Gauchospace for additional readings and handouts
CRITICAL REFLECTION & RESPONSE #3
Readings for 10/17 Discussion
Special Project Passed Out – Choose Project

WEEK THREE
Wednesday 10/17 Discussion: **1:00-2:30pm**
Children in the Juvenile Justice System

Excerpts of Readings:
Duncan, G. J., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (Eds.). (1997). *Consequences of growing up poor*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Chesney-Lind, M., & Sheldon, R. (2014) The extent of female delinquency. Chapter 1.

Cauffman, E. (2008) Understanding the Female Offender. The Future of Children.

Werner, E. E., & Smith, R. S. (1982). *Vulnerable but invincible: A longitudinal study of resilient children and youth*. New York: Adams, Bannister, & Cox.

Activity **2:30-3:50pm**
Active listening in professional and personal lives

Homework: Check Gauchospace for additional readings and handouts
CRITICAL REFLECTION & RESPONSE #4
Readings for 10/24 Discussion
Carry Out and Finalize Special Project

WEEK FOUR
Wednesday 10/24 Discussion: **1:00-2:30pm** ***SPECIAL PROJECT DUE***
Neuroscience, Trauma, Adverse Life Events and Offending

Excerpts of Readings:

Cohen, J.A., Mannarino, A.P., Kleithermes, M., Murray, L.A. (2012). Trauma-focused CBT for youth with complex trauma. Child Abuse and Neglect, 36, 528-541.

Cook, A., et. Al., (2005) Complex Trauma in Children and Adolescents. Psychiatric Annals, 35(5).

Fraser, M.W. (Ed.). (2004). *Risk and resilience in childhood: An ecological perspective* (2nd ed.). Washington, D.C.: NASW Press.

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2015) The Prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) in the Lives of Juvenile Offenders.

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2014) Assessing Exposure to Psychological Trauma and Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms in the Juvenile Justice Population.

Administrative Office of California Courts (2014) The Effects of Complex Trauma on Youth: Implications for School Discipline and Court Involved Youth.

Activity **2:30-3:50pm**
Emotional Intelligence
Reducing Stress & Designing a Self-Care Plan

Homework: Check Gauchospace for additional readings and handouts
CRITICAL REFLECTION & RESPONSE #5
Readings for 10/31 Discussion

WEEK FIVE
Wednesday 10/31 Discussion: **1:00-2:30pm**
Education and the Juvenile Justice System: Part 1 - Alternative Education Settings

Excerpts of Readings:

Leone, P. E., & Cutting, C. A. (2004). Appropriate education, juvenile corrections, and no child left behind. *Behavioral Disorders*, 29, 260–265.

Leone, P. E., Krezmien, M. P., Mason, L., & Meisel, S. M. (2005). Organizing and delivering empirically based literacy instruction to incarcerated youth. *Exceptionality*,13, 89–102.

Discussion: **2:30-3:50pm**
Education and the Juvenile Justice System: Part 2 - The School to Prison Pipeline

Excerpts of Readings:

Okonofua, J. A., & Eberhardt, J. L. (2015). Two strikes: Race and the disciplining of young students. Psychological Science, 26(5), 617–624

Skiba, R.J., Michael, R.S., Nardo, A.C. & Peterson, R. (2002) The Color of Discipline: Sources of Racial and Gender Disproportionality in School Punishment. The Urban Review.

Skiba, R., & Rausch, M. K. (2006). Zero tolerance, suspension, and expulsion: Questions of equity and effectiveness. In C. M. Evertson & C. S. Weinstein (Eds.), Handbook of classroom management: Research, practice, and contemporary issues (pp. 1063-1092). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Homework: Check Gauchospace for additional readings and handouts
CRITICAL REFLECTION & RESPONSE #6
Readings for 11/7 Discussion
INTRODUCE GROUP PROJECT/SET GROUPS

WEEK SIX
Wednesday 11/7 Discussion: **1:00-2:30pm**
Evidence Based Practice – Part 1

Excerpts of Readings:

Hawkins, J. D., Catalano, R. E, Morrison, D. M., O'Donnell, J., Abbot, R. D., & Day, L. E. (1992). The Seattle Social Development Project: Effects of the first four years on protective factors and problem behavior. In J. McCord & R. E. Tremblay (Eds.), *Preventing antisocial behavior: Interventions from birth through adolescence* (pp.139-161). New York: Guilford Press.

Howell, J., et al., (2014) A Handbook for Juvenile Justice Systems, Chapter 4: Effective Evidence Based Prevention and Intervention Programs for Juvenile Offenders.

Lipsey, M. (2009) The Primary Factors that Characterize Effective Interventions with Juvenile Offenders: A Meta-Analytic Overview. Victims and Offenders, 4, 124-147.

Martinson, R. (1974). What Works? - Questions and Answers About Prison Reform, *The Public Interest, 35: 22-54.*

Nation, M., Crusto, C., Wandersman, A., Kumpfer, K. L., Seybolt, D., Morrissey-Kane, E., & Davino, K. (2003). What works in prevention: Principles of effective prevention programs. *American Psychologist, 58*, 449–456.

Activity: **2:30-3:50pm**
Creating a self-management & rewards system
Developing self-discipline & staying focused
Celebrating your successes and talents & creating a success identity

Homework: Check Gauchospace for additional readings and handouts
CRITICAL REFLECTION & RESPONSE #7
Readings for 11/14 Discussion
GROUP PROJECT

WEEK SEVEN
Wednesday 11/14 Discussion: **1:00-2:30pm**
Evidence Based Practice – Part 2

Excerpts of Readings:

Callahan, L., Cocozza, J., Steadman, H. J., & Tillman, S. (2012). A National Survey of U.S. Juvenile Mental Health Courts. Psychiatric Services, 63(2), 130–134.

Celinska, K., Furrer, S., & Cheng, C.-C. (2013). An outcome-based evaluation of Functional Family Therapy for youth with behavior problems. OJJDP Journal of Juvenile Justice, 2(2), 23-36.

Jolliffe, D. & Farrington, D. (2007). A systematic review of the national and international evidence on the effectiveness of interventions with violent offenders. Ministry of Justice Research Series 16/07 December 2007. Retrieved from: http://www.crim.cam.ac.uk/people/academic_research/david_farrington/violmoj.pdf

Kim, S., Crutchfield, C., Williams, C., & Hepler, N. (1998). Toward a new paradigm in substance abuse and other problem behavior prevention for youth: Youth development and empowerment approach. *Journal of Drug Education*, 28(1), 1-17.

Pentz, M. A. (2003). Evidence-based prevention: Characteristics, impact, and future direction. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs, 35*(Special Suppl.), 143–152.

Activity: **2:30-3:50pm**
Motivational interviewing and The Wheel of Change

Homework: Check Gauchospace for additional readings and handouts
CRITICAL REFLECTION & RESPONSE #8
Readings for 11/21 Discussion
GROUP PROJECT

WEEK EIGHT
Wednesday 11/21 Discussion: **1:00-2:30pm**
Creating Systematic Change in the Juvenile Justice System

Zeldin, S., Camino, L., & Calvert, M. (2003). Toward an understanding of youth in community governance: Policy priorities and research directions. Social Policy Report: Giving Child and Youth Development Knowledge Away, 17(3), 1-20.

Activity: **2:30-3:50pm** ***GROUP PRESENTATIONS***
Groups will be presenting as part of the requirements for the "FINAL"

Homework: Check Gauchospace for additional readings and handouts
GROUP PROJECT
FINAL REFLECTION

WEEK NINE
Wednesday 11/28 Activity: **1:00-2:30pm** ***GROUP PRESENTATIONS***
Groups will be presenting as part of the requirements for the "FINAL"

Activity: **2:30-3:50pm** ***GROUP PRESENTATIONS***
Groups will be presenting as part of the requirements for the "FINAL"

FINAL DUE 12/5: FINAL REFLECTION

WEEK TEN
Wednesday 12/5 Activity: **1:00-4:50pm**
Discuss course, evaluations and provide feedback

FINAL DUE 12/5: IN PERSON TURN IN FINAL REFLECTION & CLASS PARTY

ADDITIONAL READING LIST & POETS
A Little Piece of Light: A Memoir of Hope, Prison, and a Life Unbound, Donna Hylton
Autobiography of Malcolm X, Malcolm X & Alex Haley
Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, Michael Foucault
Finding Freedom, Writings from Death Row, Jarvis Jay Masters
Jimmy Santiago Baca, Poet
Manchild in the Promised Land, Claude Brown
Mars Room, Rachel Kushner
Martin Espada, Poet
No More Prisons, William Upski Wimsatt
Rachel Hadas, Poet
Sing Unburied Sing, Jesmyn Ward
Writing My Wrongs: Life, Death, and Redemption in an American Prison, Shaka Senghor

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Appendix 3.

Week 8 Reflection

After reading the following quotes, reflect on your thoughts, feelings, reaction, etc. Feel free to write, sing, or draw your response-- express yourself in anyway you feel comfortable. Be prepared to share your response with the rest of the group in the next class session.

Reflect on the following quotes in relation to your reaction to the readings and group discussions.

"You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete." ~ R. Buckminster Fuller

"If you want to make peace, you don't talk to your friends. You talk to your enemies." ~Moshe Dayan

"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality." ~Bishop Desmond Tutu

Appendix 4.

Final Reflection

Please share your thoughts on your experiences and your perceptions about youth in the juvenile justice system:

Take into consideration your experiences together in class, with the discussions, readings, assignments, in class activities and guest speakers. Along with any additional outside community activities of the Freedom 4 Youth organization and working with the youth directly.

Appendix 5.

Pre-Post Assessment Questions

1. What is the typical profile (i.e. description) of a youth in the juvenile justice system?

2. Describe some of the behaviors of youth in the juvenile justice system?

3. What are some societal attitudes associated with youth who get locked up?

4. What leads to the arrest of someone under the age of 18?
a. For males?

b. For females?

5. List 5 typical environmental/social factors that youth in the juvenile justice system grow up in?
a. Using a scale of one (1) to ten (5) where one (1) is low influence and ten (10) is high influence, please score each of the listed environmental/social factors that affects youth's delinquent behavior; the higher the score the more serious you think it is

6. Over the past 5 years (between 2013 and now) would you say the incidence of juvenile offending has increased, decreased, or remained the same?
( ) Increased ( ) Decreased ( ) Remained same

7. In terms of proportions overall, what percentage of young people in the United States under 18 years (juveniles) do you think are involved in the juvenile justice system?

_____%

8. What percentage of young males do you think are arrested annually?
_____%

9. What percentage of young females do you think are arrested annually?
_____%

10. Who is primarily responsible for the behavior of youth who engage in delinquent acts?

11. What do you think about trying youth in adult criminal court?
a. I agree always
b. I agree most of the time
c. I agree some of the time
d. I agree rarely
e. I agree none of the time

12. Is it necessary to continue the juvenile courts for youth separate from the standard adult criminal and civil court system?
a. Yes definitely
b. Yes I think so
c. Not sure
d. No I don't think so
e. No definitely

13. What is your general sense of law enforcement?
( ) positive ( ) neutral ( ) negative

14. To what extent is the juvenile justice system too lenient? Too harsh?
a. Slightly to lenient
b. Moderately lenient
c. Far to lenient
d. Slighty to harsh
e. Moderately harsh
f. Far to harsh

15. Is the purpose of the juvenile justice system to punish or is the purpose to rehabilitate?
a. To punish
b. To punish and rehabilitate
c. To rehabilitate
d. Other: _____

16. Should Tasers be administered on youth in detention centers; for what behaviors?

( ) Yes ( ) No

17. Should pepper spray be administered on youth in detention centers; for what behaviors?

( ) Yes ( ) No

18. Have you or someone that you know been involved with the juvenile justice system or criminal justice system?

( ) Yes ( ) No

19. In your whole life, how many times have you engaged in delinquent behaviors and law enforcement got involved but did not give you any consequences.

a. 0
b. 1 – 2
c. 3 – 4
d. 5 – 6
e. 7 – 8
f. 9 – 10
g. More than 10

20. Have you ever been arrested? ( ) Yes ( ) No ( ) Decline to Answer

21. Have you ever been incarcerated? ( ) Yes ( ) No ( ) Decline to Answer

22. How many family or friends of yours work within law enforcement or the criminal justice system?

a. 0
b. 1 – 2
c. 3 – 4
d. 5 – 6
e. 7 – 8
f. 9 – 10
g. More than 10

23. What is the suspected percentage of youth in the juvenile justice system with a severe mental health disorder?

a. 25% or below
b. 25-50%
c. 50-75%
d. 75% or above

24. Is youth incarceration effective?
( ) Yes ( ) No

25. How safe do you feel in the community where you live?
( ) Very ( ) Fairly ( ) Neither safe nor unsafe ( ) Not very ( ) Not at all

26. Did your perception change after exposure to youth in the juvenile justice system?
( ) Yes ( ) No
Why or why not?

27. Optional: Any other perceptions about the juvenile justice system?